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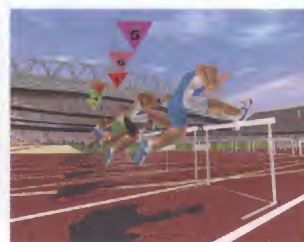
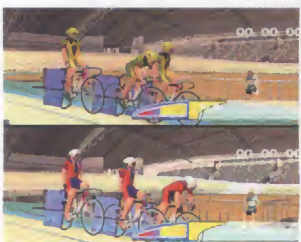


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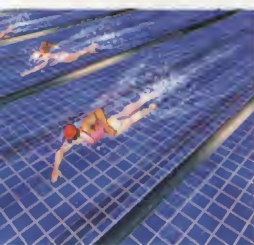
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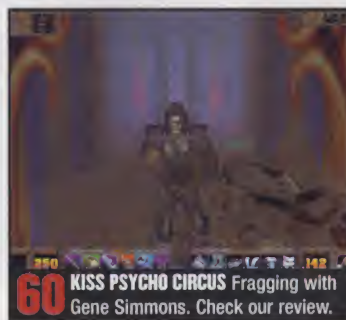
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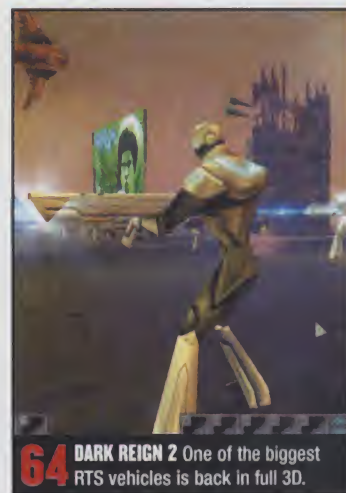
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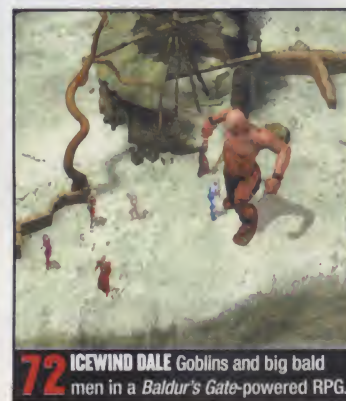
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EXCLUSIVE AND
FULLY PLAYABLE!

DEUS EX

PLUS

OPEN TENNIS 2000
MDK 2

TERMINUS

AI WARS: THE

AWAKENING

STRIKEFORCE

COUNTER-STRIKE 6.6

Q3 JAILBREAK

THE REALM

AND...

Along with these demos, we've got the finest selection of patches and utilities currently available, including the very latest update for *Half-Life*, 1.1.0.1

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WIN!

THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (93), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7LJ**. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The editor's decision is final. Closing date: Thursday 24 August 2000. The winner of our July (#91) cover compo was Mrs Alison O'Hara of Blackpool, who wins something from the *ZONE* prizes cupboard for sending in the correct answer to our last little teaser.

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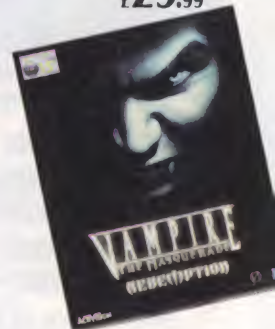
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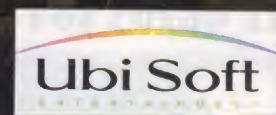


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SINGLE PLAYER, THE FUTURE AND BEYOND



This is a very exciting time for PC games players. With high-speed digital online access literally just around the corner (I can see it from here) online gaming may soon become the rule rather than the exception. This is great news for those of you who can't wait to get online and interact with like-minded people from all over the world (like yours truly for example), but for single-player games enthusiasts, the future, on the surface, looks bleak. Titles such as *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament* sport single-player games that would be slated in any self-respecting games mag if taken on their own merits, but on the 'Net' they are both huge. *Diablo II*'s single-player also leaves much to be desired, but you can safely bet that the online side of the title will be huge. All three of these titles were spawned from original releases that were very strong in single-player mode.

The writing, it would appear, is on the wall. But before we call in the grim reaper to confirm the death of single-player gaming, let's first examine the situation more closely. id may have deserted the single-player community with *Quake III* (although it's making a comeback with its *Doom* remake), but fans of the genre can take solace in the beauty

“With high-speed digital online access just around the corner online gaming may soon be the rule rather than the exception”

and depth of *Half-Life*, and the pending release of *Star Trek Voyager*, and eventually (one would hope) *Duke Nukem Forever*, which we expect to rival even *Half-Life* as a truly spectacular single-player experience. *Baldur's Gate 2* will, we expect, complete the resurrection of single-player RPGs on its release, as will *Dungeon Siege* (we know, we've seen them both). If further proof were needed that single-player gaming is alive and well, you need look no further than *Deus Ex* (which is perhaps the best single-player game out there at the moment), and *Black & White* will have strong single play when it's released, we expect nothing less with Peter Molyneux at the helm.

So, it's easy to predict a single-player wasteland in the midst of all the multiplayer hype flooding gamers at every turn, but the reality is, single-player games are here to stay for quite some time. So it was in the beginning, so it shall be in the end. Possibly. Enjoy the issue, see you all next month.

Chris Anderson

Chris Anderson,
Editor

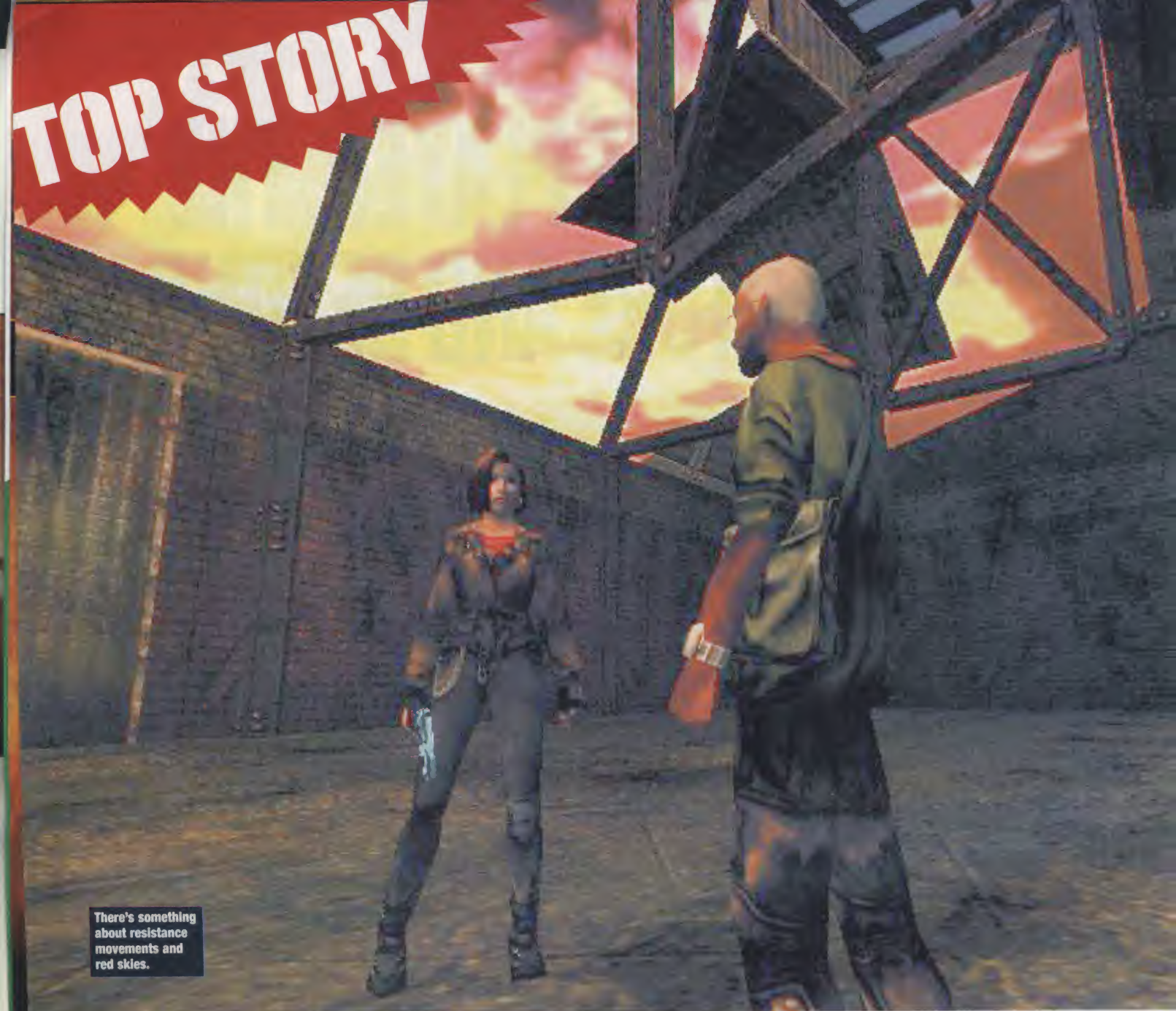


Deus Ex: proof single-player gaming is alive and well.



Black & White: the best of all possible worlds.

TOP STORY



There's something about resistance movements and red skies.

THOUGH YOU DIE, LA RESISTANCE LIVES ON, IN... **FREEDOM: FIRST RESISTANCE**

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Red Storm Entertainment
PUBLISHER Red Storm Entertainment
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Autumn 2000
WEBSITE www.redstorm.com

IN SUMMARY

Rainbow Six developer Red Storm uses its expertise of realistic third-person tactical shooters to make a sci-fi action/adventure based on an Anne McCaffrey novel. The main character is Angel, who is the leader of a resistance movement in a future where aliens have conquered Earth and enslaved most of the human race.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Both *Rainbow Six* and *Rogue Spear* are high quality games that will undoubtedly shine in a sci-fi environment. It looks like there may be more to *Freedom* than most action/adventures, hopefully turning into a better version of *Outcast* — without the voxels.

You can't blame Canada for this one. But you can point your finger at the makers of *Rainbow Six* for one of the most promising action/adventures of the year

★ **ONION SELLER** Mark Hill



Looking into the weary eyes of a rebellious woman. Is that a make-up bag in her hand?



You can talk with friendly and enemy characters. Although, you'll probably end up shooting the latter.



The blonde vs brunette battle heats up.



Dennis Rodman. But is he an alien or a human rebel?



"Yep, your knee reactions seem fine to me Ms Sanchez."

Red Storm is continuing its trend of turning best-selling novels into best-selling games and has made a move from the redneck international thriller-maker Tom Clancy to sci-fi fantasist Anne McCaffrey. *Freedom: First Resistance* is the first of a series of books and, should this enterprise prove successful, no doubt Red Storm will be bringing the whole lot on to our screens.

The basic plot is pretty run-of-the-mill, and outlines a V scenario where the Earth has been colonised by aliens. They turn humans into slaves, run concentration camps and keep a handful of earthlings as administrators. Reworking the Third Reich as an alien invasion has been done countless times before, but that doesn't mean the idea loses any of its effectiveness. And neither does using an underground resistance as a catalyst for all our rebellious instincts. Whether it's the rebels in *Star Wars*, V

or *Red Dawn*, there is little doubt that small bands of fighters struggling against an all-powerful but soulless empire hold a very special place in our collective consciousness. We all light our own personal candle to the patron of lost causes. And if you get to shoot some people in the head without feeling any guilt in the process, then all the better.

To star in this sci-fi mutiny, who better than an all-new cyberbabe and Hispanic freedom fighter? Angel Sanchez, a Jennifer Lopez lookalike,

"All-new cyber babe and Hispanic freedom fighter Angel Sanchez, a Jennifer Lopez lookalike, runs the resistance movement"

runs the resistance movement charged with knocking down the Provisional Authority and the aliens behind it.

The game plays from a third-person perspective, ensuring that we

get a good look at Angel, and most of the action revolves around puzzle-solving and stealthy combat. The emphasis on stealth is quite important, since you don't go bursting in with all guns blazing when you're clearly outnumbered. Most of the game takes place in underground hideouts and key

parts of Earth's cities, as well as some important moments aboard the invading alien spaceships. There will be a lot of exploration involved, as well as character interaction, key to the puzzle-solving element in the game. You won't be confined to controlling Angel either, as there are parts of the game where other team members play an important role. We've yet to find out exactly how this will work, but it does add variety to the proceedings. To make sure *First Resistance*'s looks live up to its potential,

Red Storm is using a souped-up version of its *Rogue Spear* engine plus more than 700 motion-captured moves. From what we've seen, Red Storm could have another winner on its hands. Just don't mention *Shadow Watch*. [A]



We'd like to see an ugly girl star in a game, for a change.



HAIL TO THE KINGS AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE CONQUERORS

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Ensemble Studios

PUBLISHER Microsoft

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE October

WEBSITE www.ensemblestudios.com

IN SUMMARY

In true expansion pack form, *The Conquerors* boasts five new civilisations, four single-player campaigns, 11 extra units and 25 new technologies. New map types include rainforests, frozen wastelands and real-world locales such as Japan and Italy. There'll also be extra skirmish and deathmatch modes and a handful of gameplay tweaks and enhancements. Not bad.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Er, hello? *Age Of Empires II* is still one of the biggest-selling strategy games in the world thanks to its ease of use and balance of play. Great strategy games demand great add-ons, and if *The Conquerors* ends up as good as *The Rise Of Rome* was for the original *Age Of Empires*, a great expansion pack is what we can expect.

Some games are bigger than others, while some games just get bigger and bigger

✚ **EXPANDING** Richie Shoemaker



The Spanish are coming to get you in the Montezuma campaign.



Now you can leave your villagers to their domestic chores and concentrate on fighting.



Ocean battles in AOE II were always a bit crap, so new ship formations are a welcome feature.



Finding food in the snow-glossed wastes is difficult at the best of times.

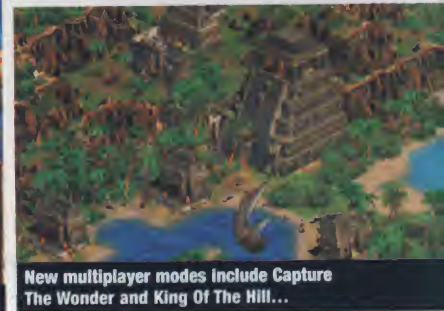
Four new campaigns for the single-player game.



Building walls will be quicker and easier thanks to the improved AI of your citizens.



Now you can make your allies work for you.



New multiplayer modes include Capture The Wonder and King Of The Hill...

No matter how good a game is, over time there is always one feature that starts to annoy. In the original *Age Of Empires* it was your villagers' inability to negotiate their way across their farmland. This 'fault' was repaired in *The Rise Of Rome* expansion pack. Guilty again in *Age Of Empires II* for their lack of vision when it came to replanting spent farmlands, it looks like an expansion pack will once again come to the rescue. Yes, in *The Conquerors* you can queue farms to automatically replant – big wows, well, in this case it is.

Like all add-ons *The Conquerors* boasts more than its fair share of new missions and units, but like the differences between *Age I* and *Age II*, it isn't so much the obvious gains that count, but rather those little things that over time come to the fore, more often than not because they were omitted. Poor pathfinding is one of those things we used to accept that we no longer

have to. Production queuing is another feature, which is now almost universal to all real-time strategy games. However, in *Age Of Empires II*, with its delicate balance of resource gathering and research, coupled with the advanced tactics through the use of formations, we have a game that has overtaken the likes of *Command & Conquer* in the features stakes. Unlike Westwood's *Firestorm* add-on for *Tiberian Sun*, we've come to expect that little bit more from Ensemble Studios.

For most people, the big draw of *The Conquerors* has to be the five new civilisations (Aztec, Mayan, Korean, The Huns and Spain) to add to the 13 already present and correct in *Age Of Empires II*. However, rather than crowbarring in new graphics and changing a few attributes, the races will feature across a number of new single-player campaigns, four in fact, almost equalling the number of missions in the original game. Led by such historical figures as Attila The Hun, El Cid and

Montezuma, campaigns will be fought across Europe, Asia and South America. Standalone battles will cover such conflicts as the battles of Hastings, Agincourt and Manzikert, and to add to the historical feel, ten real-world maps will feature, set across the UK, Spain, Italy, Japan, the Middle East and Texas.

With new civilisations come new units, 11 in total, all of which will feature in all the armies of the total 18

“Skirmish games against the computer will be enhanced with commands that can be given to allied troops”

aces. Specific to the South American armies are the scout-like Eagle Warriors, elite Jaguar Warriors and the Mayan Plumed Archers. The Huns will have mounted Tarken Warriors and the Spanish Conquistadors should make short work of anyone with their hand-cannons and trusty mounts. Complementing the new units, Ensemble has opted to add more than 20 new research fields, from the bizarre (Thumb Ring) to the obvious

(Bloodlines). Many of the new technologies and units will be available only later on in the game, which should open up what were sometimes tedious and long drawn out battles.

Which brings us neatly back to those little things, such as being able to create ship formations, which is a welcome addition, as is the ability to garrison units inside battering rams, both to protect troops and speed up the ram's

movement. Skirmish games against the computer will also be enhanced with commands that can be given to allied troops belonging to a computer-controlled player. These are the things we are looking forward to most, as they're the things that turn a simple add-on into an expansion pack. It's the features that improve *how* a game plays that count rather than *how long* the game lasts. Something Ensemble sussed out a long time ago. [P]

ALIVE & KICKING

NEWS EDITOR David Woods



Bad news for the legion of female fans that flock to this page to see the gorgeous Richie 'Cool'

Shoemaker. He's off getting married at this precise moment, after which he's off to Malta on his honeymoon. So you've missed your chance.

It's bad news for me as well. At this point in the issue I'm normally firmly ensconced in my reclining chair, sipping cocktails, and playing *Counter-Strike*. Instead I'm doing Richie's job. I know life isn't fair, but there are limits.

However, delving around in the murkier recesses of the news, I've noticed that a lot of people are up in arms about what they see as the beginning of the end for the PC. Sparked off by Peter Molyneux's announcement that *Black & White* would be his last PC title, it was swiftly followed by a conspiracy theory about *Halo* and Bungie's defection to Microsoft and the X-Box camp.

It's not quite as bad as it sounds, though. Firstly, Peter Molyneux was taken out of context. What he said was that *Black & White* would be the last game to lead on the PC platform. He's talking about leading on a console, taking the devil's shilling and then converting to PC. This shouldn't make a difference as his game's are so off-the-wall it matters not one jot what he develops on first.

How about the *Halo* rumours? As soon as Microsoft announced it was buying Bungie, chat forums were awash with the news that this wasn't going to be released on PC after all, but as an exclusive X-Box lead. I can't see this happening. The console and PC markets are quite different. Microsoft wants to nick customers off Sony and Sega; it knows PC owners are still going to keep their PCs whether they buy an X-Box or not.

The real proof that the PC isn't dying lies with the fact that you can download mods free off the Internet. This is where the future lies. Community. There's a massive DIY spirit at the moment and, if it carries on, then we've got nothing to worry about.

WIN! DVDS AND GAMES

Ground Control is up for grabs

P.16



TECHHEAD

The latest and greatest hardware news

P.20



Characters will be fully developed in the final game.



The Predator promises to be truer to the films.

ALIENS VERSUS SEQUEL

These early drawings seem to indicate a more comic book style approach.

Fox announce the follow-up to AvP.

Monolith, known for the acclaimed FPSs *Blood II* and *Shogo*, has been handed the mammoth task of developing the sequel to *Aliens Vs Predator*. There's no news yet on the title, although sources at Fox Interactive have confirmed that it will be something more imaginative than *AvP 2*.

The game will be powered by the LithTech 2 engine, which promises to blow away the one used recently in *Kiss: Psycho Circus*. While the original *AvP* used darkness to great effect, producing in the process some of the most tense and scary moments any of us have ever experienced playing a game, some people complained that it was slightly overdone. The sequel won't be dropping the trademark pitch-black look completely, but it will be adding some lighter moments to contrast with the claustrophobic space station areas, pacing the gameplay to avoid the heart-straining constant anxiety most players experienced during the original.

Monolith is also working on adding more detail into the game (the *Predator* targeting laser, for example), and is adamant that it will be very story-driven. Considering the amount of comic books and novels that the franchise has generated, it does seem strange that *AvP* had such a rigidly straight-forward plot instead of drawing from all those sources. The main inspiration will still come from the James Cameron-directed *Aliens*, as well as the two *Predator* films, so you needn't worry about it being set on a dreary prison-planet populated by perverse monks or only having one alien to fight.

The sequel has been in development for some time, but isn't scheduled to arrive for at least another year. Hopefully we can bring some screenshots soon. In the meantime, you'll have to be content with some of Monolith's preliminary concept art.



THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P.22



chartTrack

MAN WHO KNOWS

The latest industry gossip

P.30



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?

Three more games that should've been here by now

P.31



HOTSHOTS

This month: Sacrifice

P.32



BITMAPS GO BACK TO WAR

Z is set for a comeback, and it's looking pretty good

What's the biggest problem facing modern real-time strategy games? Inept AI levels? Incomprehensible control methods? Resource management? Nope. The biggest problem facing the real-time strategy genre in this modern world of robotic dogs, bottled oxygen and Billie Piper is that it takes itself so god-damned seriously. It's all: "Help, save us from these evil overlords!" and, "Take that hill and defend it with your life, soldier!" and, "You are mankind's last hope for survival." Who needs all that pressure frankly?

Not the Bitmap Brothers, that's for sure. Back in 1996, the veteran 16-bit heroes turned the genre on its head with the simple addition of two spaced-out, head-banging robots cheerfully disobeying orders from a maniacal sergeant major. The game was Z, it was hilarious and came as a great relief from the po-faced seriousness of *Command & Conquer* et al.

As they mentioned in an interview back in June, the sequel - Z2 - is under way and heading for an end-of-

year release. This time round, however, the humour has been toned down somewhat to make way for a more involving storyline (penned by ex-*Tomb Raider* writer Chris Maule), told during the missions - à la *Ground Control*.

Also amended is the difficulty level. The one thing that may have worked against the original game (and was one of the reasons it bombed everywhere but in the UK) was that it was insanely hard. A lot of work has gone into balancing both the AI levels and the game's 30 unit types,

especially with regards to the smaller units, making sure they're not so easily overwhelmed and that they work well in partnership with other types. Also thrown into the mix are airborne units in the shape of helicopters.

Z's territorial-based gameplay remains intact, with the Bitmap's citing it as one of the areas that sets Z2 apart from other RTS titles. Rather than building up large, heavily-defended bases, players need to venture out into the maps and take command of resource markers. These maps aren't just limited to the 30 single-player missions either. The Bitmap Brothers are generously

supplying a full editing suite with the game, the same one that they've been using to create the actual game, enabling players to build their own levels, units and God knows what else. Z2 has been looking like a refreshing burst of originality for the RTS genre for some time now, and we'll bring you a full-on preview soon.

Helicopters really boost the strategic element.



As you can see...



... the game is a rich...



... and varied one.



The 3D is a welcome departure from the flat 2D original.



More bang for your buck. Guaranteed.



TRAIL OF BEARDS

More facial fuzz in the new RPG *Wizards And Warriors*

When you hear a title like *Wizards And Warriors*, you know you're in for some hard-hitting gritty realism. And that is exactly what you get in this new RPG from D W Bradley (who worked on three of the *Wizardry* games), with giant toads that go "Umbah, Umbah, Croak", vomiting Egyptian mummies and big-nosed trolls. You also get an insanely high number of character classes to play around with, including more interesting and unusual ones, such as Trickster, Samurai, Zen Master and, our personal favourite, Ninja, as well as the more common titular characters. As if that weren't enough, you can combine them with all the races available, which also feature some atypical choices, like the Gnobbits, Pixies, Oomphaz (elephants), Whiskas (cats), Gourks (pigs) and Lizzords (take a guess). Your party is made up of up to six members who must be chosen for balance. The game takes place in an enchanted medieval realm called Gael Serran, where an evil Pharaoh has returned from the dead to spread his chaos. The only way of defeating him is finding the legendary Mavin Sword with the assistance of Kerah, an angel on your side. On the way you'll find more than a hundred quests and hundreds of people to interact with. The game is being published by Activision and should be out in September. We can hardly wait.



DVD AND GROUND CONTROL GIVEAWAY

The DVD revolution continues with the release of classic hacking flick *WarGames*, along with Gene Hackman's political thriller *The Package*. To celebrate (we don't need much of an excuse in the *ZONE* office) we've teamed up with MGM and Sierra to offer five of you the opportunity to own one of each along with your very own copy of the excellent RTS *Ground Control*. We reviewed this game last issue and gave it our award of excellence and the following glowing recommendation. "*Ground Control* goes straight for the jugular – in, out and no messing about. Buy it – you won't regret it." Win it and you're laughing.

All you have to do is answer this simple question:

Who was the fresh-faced star of *WarGames*?

A: Matthew Kelly

B: Matthew Broderick

C: Matthew Le Tissier

Send in your answers on a postcard to **PC ZONE**, Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford, BD15RZ, with the following details:

- ✱ Title/Forename/Surname/Address/Postcode/Daytime phone number and e-mail address
- ✱ Please indicate on the postcard if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers from companies other than Dennis Publishing Ltd.
- ✱ Please indicate if you are under 18 years of age.
- ✱ CPCZ009B

✱ If you don't win you could always think about shelling out a bit of cash money. The *Package* and *WarGames* are available to buy on DVD for £19.99 each. *Ground Control* costs £34.99 and it's worth every penny.

✱ **Terms and conditions:** Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. And all that. Phew!

UNREAL TV

In a brave move, BBC2 is set to introduce the delights of online gaming to the small screen in a new gameshow built around the fantastic *Unreal Tournament*. Players will be scanned into specially designed maps, and spectator cameras will give you an in-game view of all the action.

Unfortunately, some of the more realistic weapons are going to be removed from the game in favour of bright, sparkly plasma guns and the like. So if, like Martin Korda, your idea of fun is sitting at the top of some tower with a sniper rifle pointing down at a speck on the

horizon, forget it. This sanitised version isn't for you.

John Riley, the programmes producer explains. "You have to be very careful as a producer; you have to tread a very fine line between what is acceptable to the viewing public in taste and decency, but also keeping the credibility of the gameplay. We'll take out things that look like hand guns and sniper rifles. But a plasma rifle is OK – it's what you see on *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*." Indeed. Look out for *Unreal* on your TV sets sometime this autumn. As soon as we get more details, we'll let you know.



RESIDENT EVIL: NEMESIS

When there's no more room in hell, the dead will walk the Earth...

Survival horror. We've already shivered our way through the first two *Resident Evil* games, and the good news is that *Nemesis*, the third PlayStation instalment has been converted to the PC and should be ready for review next issue.

The prequel/sequel (it takes place 24 hours before and 24 hours after *Resident Evil 2*) promises new moves for the two heroes, Jill Valentine (from *Resident Evil*) and new male sidekick Carlos Oliviera. For a start, they've been trained in taking flights of steps in one single smooth movement. In previous episodes the game paused while a separate animation kicked in.

You can utilise the new 180 degree spin, which features in the new Dreamcast game, which should help you deal with the hordes of zombies that Capcom is promising. Some people found *Resident Evil 2* overwhelming with more zombies than ammunition and the trend is set to continue with up to ten zombies on screen at any time.

Purists and fans of the Romero and Fulci films will also be pleased to hear that the undead are going to look far more realistic,

with personal characteristics lending more of a personality. Expect to see fat zombies, thin zombies, males and females, with enhanced AI that means not all of them want to chow down on your intestines. They're also going to move at different speeds, with some able to reach a lazy jog in their quest for the crimson.

There are two other bad guys to watch out for who can pick up and throw your character and boast massive strength and speed, and then there's the Nemesis itself, which we're not going to ruin by unmasking. All you need to know is that his first appearance in the game is more shocking than any of the classics from the other two instalments put together.

We haven't seen the game running yet so we can't comment on the graphics. Capcom traditionally doesn't put that much extra effort into the PC version, but we're hoping that *Nemesis* will buck the trend. We've played *Codename Veronica* on the Dreamcast and the enhanced graphics show the quality that we should be demanding on the PC. Here's hoping.



Back alleys will once again be the main battleground against the undead.



Expect even more blood and guts than before.



"There's five of you and only two bullets. Stay in line please."

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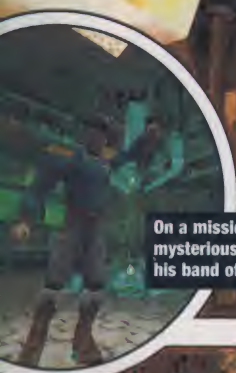
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ONE MAN AND HIS GUN



Have you seen the size of this bloke's chopper?



On a mission to find the mysterious General and his band of rebel outlaws.



Help to save endangered species.



Customise your weapons for bloodier carnage.

Brand new single-player TC for *Half-Life* on its way

With the entire world playing *Counter-Strike* over LANs and the Internet you might be forgiven for forgetting *Half-Life*'s roots as a single-player shooter. There have only been a few single-player conversions, including the admittedly excellent *Redemption*, but the good news is that there's another one on the way and it's looking superb.

Gunman uses the *Half-Life* engine as its core but, as you can see from the screenshots, it is set in a universe that is a million light years away from Gordon Freeman and his bunch of cronies. You play the part of a soldier who is sent out to find information about an alien race called the Xenomes, which has been destructively colonising several inhabited hi-tech planets. Once the planet has been decimated the Xenomes then fight among themselves until nothing is left, which sounds like the English football 'fans' approach to Euro 2000.

The mod is still in development, but so far the list of weapons announced includes a machine gun, shotgun, dual missile launcher, beam gun and chemical gun. More are promised, including melee weapons and rifles, and the big news is that you can customise these weapons to suit individual situations, which goes way beyond simple alternate fire modes. How this will work in practice is still under debate.

The action takes place across four different planets and throws loads of different opponents at you, including Xenomes, machines, dinosaurs and soldiers. The *Half-Life* engine was chosen because of its advanced AI, which is the main reason the original game got such praise in the first place. If this works the same way in *Gunman*, and there's no reason why it shouldn't, then you're in for a treat. We'll keep you bang up-to-date with the latest developments and, in the meantime, you can check the progress yourself at www.gunman.valveworld.com





Frantic and very, very funny.

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM

Get ready for *Serious Sam's* arrival

Serious Sam is a brand new shooter that couldn't give a toss about airs and graces. Taking its cue from *Doom*, the game is powered by the *Serious* engine and promises huge indoor and outdoor arenas, and swarms of monsters, including the superb suicide bombers who charge at you with an explosive in each hand and a scream that would put the willies up Duke Nukem.

There's a compatibility test demo available on the Croteam Website (www.croteam.com), which gives you the perfect opportunity to see what all the fuss is about as long as your connection can withstand the hefty 50Mb download. We think it's hilarious and, as an arcade blaster, it's already looking like one to watch. As always we'll bring you the latest news, and the demo on our cover CD as soon as the official release is announced. The game itself is going to ship early 2001.



Cogs are obviously a big thing in *Timeline*.



A foundry in medieval France. This isn't an *Edutainment* title, is it?



Looks like a school tip alright.

TIME FOR A QUICK LINE?

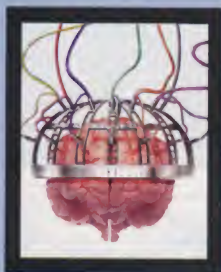
Michael Crichton's latest bestseller is heading for the gaming world...

Based on the latest novel by Michael Crichton, the mediocre author of such bestsellers as *Jurassic Park*, *Congo* and *Sphere*, *Timeline* is the first game from Timeline Studios, the company the writer founded. Mr Crichton himself is getting involved in the development process, ensuring that the book's story and ideas are translated properly into the game. If you're not familiar with the plot, it revolves around a group of time-

travelling students who go to 14th-Century France in search of their teacher. Not the greatest premise in the world, but it looks like it might be a much better game than it would be a Hollywood blockbuster (which is what most of his books end up as). You play as one of the students, exploring an extremely accurate medieval France, going through all sorts of jolly-good-fun adventures. Apparently, the game will be very simple to navigate and

won't force players to learn complex keyboard commands. Alright, so it isn't a flight sim then. Such an announcement, coupled with the screenshots we've seen, led us to believe *Timeline* might be trying to appeal to all the *Myst* fans among you. We sincerely hope there's much more to it than that. Although Eidos, who are publishing it, will be hoping it's somewhere near as successful. Expect to see it in the shops in time for Christmas.





TECH HEAD

The hardware heavyweights come out of their corners, again

★ READY TO RUMBLE Carlos Ruiz

FACTCANNON

★ Sony (www.sony.com) is always churning out top pieces of computer kit, and its latest digital display certainly doesn't let the side down. The Multiscan N50 (with a 15in diagonal that is comparable in viewable size to a 17in CRT monitor) is the thinnest and best looking LCD panel we've seen – with elegant silver lines, a profile of just half an inch, and a feature that turns the screen off when you move away from it. Well, that's the least you'd expect for just a shade under £1,300.



★ Microsoft Windows Me (www.windows.com) will be arriving on a shelf near you this September. Aside from the enhanced Internet, digital media and networking tools, it'll also be invaluable if you have a PC that likes to play up a lot. Including DirectX 8 and Internet Explorer 5.5, it will almost certainly be worth the £70-80 upgrade price. The full list of features can be found at the above website.



★ Microsoft's (www.microsoft.com) impressive laser-sighted Intellimouse Explorer (91 per cent, PCZ #85) has now spawned a symmetrical sidekick – which, predictably, is great news if you're left-handed and in need of something to impress your mates

with. It'll cost between £40 and £50 from any half decent retailer.



★ Finally, here are some details regarding Intel's three new Celerons – the 633, 667 and 700MHz chips will be made available to compete with Duron (see main story), all in a FC-PGA (flip-chip) format, with 128Kb of cache and a 66MHz system bus. Prices start from around £125 for the 633MHz version.



DOUBLE ACT

AMD is building on the success of the Athlon with two new offensives

Both the Duron and Thunderbird chips will come in a socket form factor, since advances in silicon manufacturing have made this the most cost effective option.

The Athlon processor has seen great success against its chief rival, Intel's Pentium III. Although the pair are now neck and neck in terms of pound-for-pound performance, supplies of Athlon chips have been better than those of Pentium IIIs, allowing AMD to make further inroads into Intel's dominance.

The question of how long this dominance will prevail is set to be answered soon, if AMD has its way. Its new Duron range is aimed at Intel's Celeron series, and this will certainly be a fun contest to observe – as budget buyers hunt for the most megahertz for their money, and rabid overclockers seek the biggest potential yield in performance.

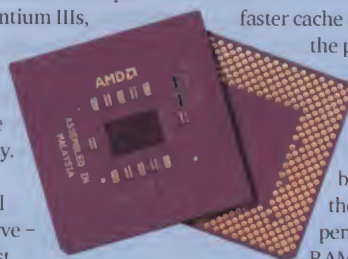
The other side of the scale sees the new Thunderbird chips challenge the best Intel has to offer. Essentially a second-generation Athlon processor, Thunderbird adopts key speed-enhancing

features such as full speed, on-die cache.

In a nutshell, this means that the cache runs at the same clock speed as the processor, and is situated on the die of the processor itself. To compare, Athlons have half-speed cache that is situated off-die. Surprisingly, the fact that Athlons have twice the actual amount of cache (512Kb compared to the 256Kb of Thunderbird) makes little difference – the faster cache and the cache in closer proximity to the processor always wins, and provides noticeably better performance.

Thunderbird processors should be available now, initially in 750MHz to 1GHz variants. Prices will be around 25-40 per cent higher than the Athlon equivalent, but worth every penny if you have a decent amount of RAM and a top graphics card.

You will, however, need the correct motherboard as well. If you want to upgrade your Athlon system to Thunderbird status, you'll need a motherboard based on one of Amides own chipsets, or one based on VIA's latest KT133 chipset. VIA's previous KX133 chipset will not accommodate the new chips.



GTS POWER

As promised, NVIDIA is setting new standards for graphics this summer

When NVIDIA released the groundbreaking GeForce 256 chipset last Christmas, it guaranteed something new on the cards six months down the line. With the introduction of the first GeForce2 GTS cards in June, NVIDIA has kept its word and come up trumps yet again.

GTS stands for GigaTexel Shading, and this is a first in graphics card technology, which some say NVIDIA is plugging more than is necessary. The bottom line, however, is that despite how much you rate its importance and the worthiness of its own initials, GTS is probably the single biggest technical improvement that the GeForce2 has over the GeForce 256.

Now, this isn't to say that the GeForce2 isn't worth the extra cash, because GTS goes some way to providing an insanely high 1.6 GigaTexel fillrate – excellent for high resolutions, colour depths and polygon counts. The slightly revised core also means that the jump from 32Mb to 64Mb makes more difference in these departments.

There are a few other neat touches, including NVIDIA's Shading Rasterizer (NSR), which delivers a blinding seven pixel operations per pass. Core clock speeds have been increased from the planned 160MHz to an impressive 200MHz, and DDR RAM memory speeds are at 333MHz.

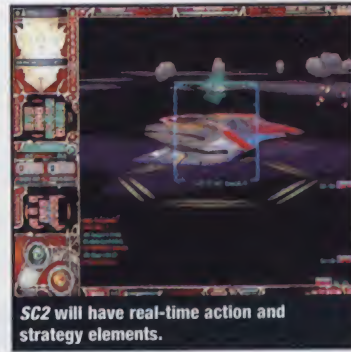


Thankfully, SDRAM GeForce cards are being phased out and replaced with DDR RAM variants. At more than £250 for a 32Mb DDR RAM GeForce2 GTS card, they're not cheap, but prices should drop soon.

They will represent the current cream of the graphics card crop, although 3dfx's Voodoo5 5500 (also a 64Mb card) will pose a threat. Both 64Mb cards are powerful, but it depends on whether you want the advanced features and second-generation hardware T&L of the GeForce2 GTS, or the raw power and visual wizardry of the Voodoo5. Turn to page 92 for full reviews of both cards.

After the success of *Starfleet Command*, the team behind the game (well, half of it at least, as they've formed a new development team called Taldren), are working on a follow up title. *Starfleet Command 2* is being designed with the original very much in mind, mixing strategy and real-time space combat action.

Unfortunately, the game won't be based on a new game engine. Instead, Taldren is working on improving the engine used for the original, but promises graphical enhancements, as well as superior AI. One of the improvements we're being promised is on the multiplayer side of things, which will have several new features, including a join-in-progress option. This should allow other players to jump in mid-way through a game.



Expect to see *SG2* at around about Christmas time.

MID-BLUE
GAME-ZONE

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97	L19.99	
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93	MOBILE RALLY MASTERS	
92	MIGHT & MAGIK MINDSHOCK	
91	MINDScape FULLY COMPANION	
90	MURPHY	
89	MURDER 2000	
88	MUSKETEER	
87	MUSKETEER 2000	
86	MUSKETEER 2000 (STANDARD)	
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84	MUSKETEER 2000 (STANDARD)	
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82	NASCAR 3	
81	NASCAR 3	
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 MADCAT! MULTI TAP (4 PLAYER EXT.)
 SCORPION - AUTO FIRE RECOIL GUN
 (Sega Dreamcast)

[illegible]

CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what *you* think

THE megastores TOP 10

JUN	AUG	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
NE	1	DIABLO II	BLIZZARD	HAVAS	72%
NE	2	SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR	CREATIVE ASSEMBLY	EA	93%
1	3	CHAMP MAN 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
NE	4	VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE REDEMPTION	NIHILISTIC	ACTIVISION	90%
3	5	UNREAL TOURNAMENT	EPIC/DIGITAL EXTREMES	INFOGRAMES	90%
2	6	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
4	7	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%
RE	8	HALF-LIFE	VALVE	SIERRA	95%
RE	9	C&C: TIBERIAN SUN	WESTWOOD	EA	82%
RE	10	IMPERIUM GALACTICA 2	GT	INFOGRAMES	83%

THE TOP 10

JUN	AUG	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
NE	1	SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR	CREATIVE ASSEMBLY	EA	93%
1	2	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
2	3	CHAMP MAN 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
NE	4	DIABLO II	BLIZZARD	HAVAS	72%
4	5	AOE II: THE AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	89%
3	6	SOLDIER OF FORTUNE	RAVEN SOFTWARE	ACTIVISION	80%
6	7	EURO 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	70%
10	8	F1 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	75%
5	9	TACHYON: THE FRINGE	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	68%
7	10	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 2000)

COMPETITION WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

Diablo II is the sequel to which RPG blockbuster?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with *all* the information requested, to the address below.

- ★ Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18
- ★ Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies
- ★ Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ0009A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: Thursday 24 Aug.

★ Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.



It doesn't matter what we say, *Diablo II* will still sell loads.

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

One question dominates my thoughts as I scan the charts. Where is *Dalkatana*? Even looking down as far as the Top 30, there's still no sign of Ion Storm's flop. To make matters worse, even *Airport Inc* and *Tweenies* have sold in greater numbers. The game's obviously as unpopular as it is poor.

The mighty *Shogun* has finally knocked *The Sims* off the top – it couldn't have been deposed by a more deserving game. *Champ Manager 99/00* and *AOEII* are hanging on in there, while the slightly disappointing but eagerly awaited *Diablo II* makes its debut in a respectable, if slightly unspectacular fourth place.

Martin Korda

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Good to see *Shogun* at No 1, as it's such an excellent RTS game. *The Sims* has hung around a little too long, and I can't believe so many people are still buying it, as it does get a little dull. Most of the other games in here have deserved their place, but why do people keep falling for EA's rip off tactics of releasing a football game every other week?"

Owain Lovell, Nottingham

"*Shogun* is a real shot in the arm for the charts, which have been looking very stale lately. It's good to see a strategy title creating a real buzz, and, if there's any justice, it'll be a feature in the charts for months to come. A real classic."

Lazarus and The Gimp, via email

"Once again, EA rears its ugly head. Why do people continue to buy these *FIFA* games? OK, it may say Euro, but it's just another *Road To The World Cup* game, isn't it? Till I see something original pop up from EA's womb, the money will stay in my pocket. Good to see *Soldier Of Fortune* still in there. One of the best games of the year."

dgnr8, via email

"Nothing much has changed this month. Sure all the games are good and deserve to stay in but, apart from *Shogun*, there isn't anything new. Everybody should go and buy *Vampire*."

Ben Worthington, Cheltenham

"It's good to see *AOEII* still hanging on in there. With that at No 5 and *Shogun* at No 1, it shows that there's still life in the RTS genre."

Matt Savory, Exeter

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (Activision)
- 2 *Champ Manager 3* (Eidos)
- 3 *Star Trek: Birth Of The Federation* (Microprose)
- 4 *Star Wars: Episode 1 – Racer* (Activision)
- 5 *Dungeon Keeper 2* (Bullfrog)

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *World Cup 98* (EA)
- 2 *Unreal* (GT/Epic Megagames)
- 3 *Microsoft Plus! W98* (Microsoft)
- 4 *Ultimate Soccer Manager 98* (Sierra Online)
- 5 *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines* (Eidos)

5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *Star Trek TNG: The Final Unity* (Microprose)
- 2 *FX Fighter* (GTE/Phillips)
- 3 *Theme Park* (Bullfrog)
- 4 *Ful Throttle* (LucasArts)
- 5 *Indy Car Racing* (The White Label)



You get to destroy the enemy base and everything.



The people seem disproportionate but very detailed.

Paying absolutely no heed to the exploding scene of new 3D RTS games such as *Earth 2150* and *Ground Control*, Virgin Interactive is publishing *Original War*. The title is being developed by Altar Interactive, who is apparently big in Eastern Europe thanks to its tactical board games. *Original War* doesn't pretend to be anything other than a *Command & Conquer* clone, albeit a much better looking one than *Tiberian Sun* was. You can play as the Americans, the Arabs or the Russians, all of which have travelled back in time to the Pliocene Epoch in search of a rare mineral called Alaskite (or Siberite, depending on the race you choose). It seems all old-school RTS games are the product of frustrated geologists, who like nothing more than sticking prods into the ground and extracting bits of rock. Martin Klima, managing director of Altar

DERIVATIVE WAR

It's like the cold war never happened

Interactive explains a bit more about the game: "Once the player is sent back in time they can play as they choose. There are many different endings to the game, so the player can side with the other factions, carry out the wishes of the government that sent them back or even pursue their own agenda. Each

faction is very different with varying units, abilities and objectives – the Americans want to mine the Alaskite, the Russians want to leave it where it is and the Arabs want to destroy it." It seems there may be more to the game after all. We'll have to wait until later this year to find out for sure.

WORLD SPORTS CARS

Get set for an emotional ride from West Racing

One of the more impressive looking racing sims we've seen of late has to be *World Sports Cars* from Empire Interactive. Promising to introduce whole new levels of realism into racing games, *World Sports Cars* is being designed to "simulate the emotions of racing rather than the adrenaline rush of the race."

That may sound rather grand, but in practice it means that every last detail of the racing weekend is simulated, from driving the car off the trailer, to managing the pitstops mid race. Not to mention the actual driving which, we can confirm from a hands-on test feels more like real driving than anything we've experienced to date. It's an

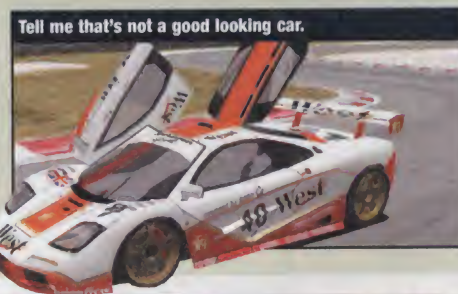
impressive visual beast too, with every spark plug, disk pad and water bucket simulated.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the game though, is that it harkens back to the days of tiny development teams and independent content control. West Racing is made up of just two brothers, Chris and Tony West, motoring enthusiasts through and through. That, if nothing else, deserves our respect in this age of marketing-led design ideas and big money franchises.

World Sports Cars is on course (ho ho) for an end of year release and we'll definitely be keeping our eyes on it and bringing you more details soon.



The full racing weekend is simulated.



Tell me that's not a good looking car.

Do you really know who you can trust?



restricted

DIVE DIVE DIVE

Harpoon goes forth with a brand new sequel

In the hard fought world of hardcore submarine simulations, one name is king. Larry Bond's *Harpoon* series has been ruling the waves for more than ten years, thanks in part to the amazing levels of authenticity the developers see fit to cram into every game. Well, armchair admirals have even more reason to cheer now thanks to Ultimatum's announcement of a fourth *Harpoon* game that takes all the attention to detail seen in the previous three and (finally) adds them to state-of-the-art graphics.

More than 250 warships, submarines, aircraft and ground units have been crammed into the game, which is due for release in September, and spans the military forces of 14 different nations.

The action takes place solely in northern Europe, although it's a highly detailed northern Europe, created from satellite imagery, accurate bathymetric data, up-to-the-minute weather and ice floe information and, no doubt, fish breeding patterns. Probably.

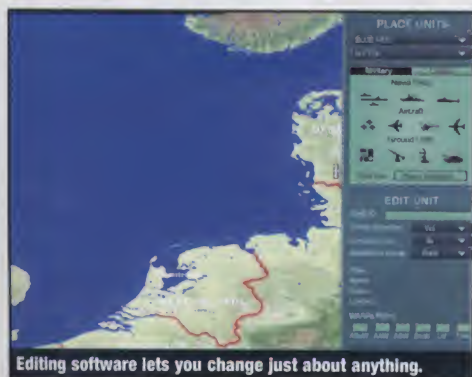
If that wasn't enough, there's even a powerful scenario editor available that not only lets you design your own conflicts, but also lets you add any obscure fighting units that the developers may have inadvertently overlooked.

This level of anally retentive detail is sure to prove a sure-fire hit with the specialist crowd, as is the inclusion of an extensive database of naval hardware



from around the world.

Ultimatum (and publisher SSI) are hoping that the inclusion of a highly detailed 3D graphics engine will be enough to woo the wider audience into this most strategic of titles. It's a bold attempt but one that you can't help thinking is doomed to failure. Still, at least the hardcore crowd will get a taste of what can be done with what is an otherwise closed-off genre.



COMMAND HAVE A GO

If you're smart and organised enough

More naval tomfoolery in the shape of Mattel Interactive's *Destroyer Command*. This time you're transported by the magic of virtual reality entertainment back to WWII and tasked with hunting down whatever German, Italian and Japanese forces are unlucky enough to cross your path.

Fighting for either the British or American navy, you're given full command of a historically accurate destroyer, controlling everything from the deck guns to the engine room. Learn to master every aspect of your ship or you'll

probably find yourself heading to the bottom of the sea faster than a drowning kitty in a lead-lined bag.

Duties include escorting convoys, intercepting warships and the ever-exciting anti-submarine warfare, with specialised underwater AI routines doing their best to evade your efforts. Missions are taken from real WWII-era battles to add a flavour of authenticity to things (and to give history scholars a chance to see if hindsight really is such a useful thing), or from a random scenario generator that ensures plenty of replayability. There will also be a full mission editor, which will allow you to create your own battles.

The accuracy of the game stretches as far as realistic ocean modelling, including the ebb and flow of the waves and how the weather affects your weapons' capabilities and your ships' movements.

Another nice feature is the cross-compatibility with submarine simulation *Silent Hunter 2*, providing all manner of multiplayer fun, assuming your idea of fun is a damp game of hide and seek that lasts for several days and results in one player's eventual death. Still, horses for courses and all that.

Destroyer Command is set for release later this autumn and will no doubt be a welcome addition to the relatively limited amount of naval warfare titles on offer.





A big fight with robots. Yesterday.



Not all the action takes place on a ship...



But there's no visual evidence to the contrary yet.

HARBINGER OF DOOM

A great huge ship spreading mass destruction? That won't do

After the huge disappointment of *Diablo II*, we're already looking forward to the next big things to happen in the action RPG world, including *Harbinger* from Silverback Entertainment. Go to its official Website at (www.silverbackgames.com) and you'll get swamped with the following guff: "The skies darken as *Harbinger* enters a solar system, dwarfing planets and leaving devastation in its wake. Entire civilisations are cleansed, planets eliminated. A few have escaped and formed an underground society deep within the forgotten levels of the behemoth." Crikey, and guess what? This is where you come in.

You can play as one of three distinct characters: either an escaped human, a nutty robot who has been the victim of transferred consciousness and is trying to work out who the hell he is, or the last of the peaceful Culibine, enraged by the destruction of her species and in possession of some pretty nifty ambient energy. Character development is level-based and only pertinent

skills will be upgraded, although an official skill set has yet to be announced.

The path of the game is dictated by your actions rather than through dialogue, and the game will differ depending on which character you decide to play. In another departure from the mass of *Diablo*-clones currently littering the skies, *Harbinger* is going all out for a decent storyline with the promise of advanced interactivity inside the levels and strong AI to complete the immersive experience. One example of this is that guards will be set to patrol certain areas, rather than sitting still and waiting for you to chance upon them. Another thing that's certain from looking at the screenshots is that *Harbinger* is taking the RPG into the realms of science fiction. The game will not ship with a razor in the box and beards are most definitely on the banned list. The soundtrack will reflect this and you can expect a strong industrial feel to the music.



Time to get this back to my nest.

So far so good, but the funny thing is that Silverback was also responsible for *Postal*, a game that was roundly condemned for being both sick and utterly useless, a combination that hopefully won't be levelled at its latest title. Watch this space.

Ever thought the whole world was against you?



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gamesdevelopment ²⁰⁰⁰ awards ^{in association with} **PCZONE**
 gameswire.com

GAMES DEVELOPMENT AWARDS 2000

So you reckon you're the next Peter Molyneux or Jon Carmack? Then it's time for you to make your mark on the gaming world. Adam Phillips explains how...

Here at PC ZONE, we're worried. Not about our expanding waistlines (*speak for yourself - Ed*) or our strained eyeballs from looking at monitors all day. No, we are worried about the future of PC gaming. "Why?", you might ask. "We've got games hitting the shelves every week and, never mind the consoles, the PC is the place to be when it comes to innovation in gaming."

Yes, that is indeed true, but our worry is far more fundamental. You see, the gaming community landscape has changed beyond recognition since the early days of blokes banging out code in their bedrooms. Perhaps with the exception of the mod scene, there is nowhere a small creative team with sod all money and an innovative game design can show off

their ideas for all the world to see. Needless to say, we thought we'd do something about it.

So, in conjunction with our chums at Gameswire.com, the Department Of Trade & Industry and the Scottish Enterprise, the Gameswire.com Games Development Awards have been launched to help future gaming gurus get their ideas out into the public arena, and thrust under the noses of the industry's movers and shakers.

The competition itself is structured into several categories and each will be judged by a handful of industry pundits, from the likes of Richard Darling at Codemasters and Ian Livingstone of Eidos to our very own editor, Mr Chris Anderson. The categories are as follows:

OPEN

Your Mission: to dream up and code a one level, fully playable game. You can make the level as big, or as small, as you like and file size is not an issue. Our judges will be taking into account extra effort made for peripheral support. All coding must be original, ie your own creation, so no slapping in a wedge of id Software code to speed up your 3D shooter...

SINGLE-SCREEN GAME

Your Mission: to create a single-screen game which doesn't require scrolling. Think that's boring? Well, take a look at the likes of *Tetris* and *Bubble Bobble*

"Discovering the best new developing talent in the UK"

and think again - with games like this, imagination and creativity is the bottom line. We're not particularly looking for barnstorming graphics or 3D surround sound - your focus should be on coming up with a strong and creative concept. Multiplayer options are perfectly acceptable and, remember, make sure that all the coding is your own.

ONLINE WEBSITE GAME

Your mission: OK, so compared to *Half-Life*, most Website games are primitive and about as inviting as a night in a police cell with a Glaswegian drug addict, but what this platform does offer coders is the opportunity to get back to basics with that all important thing - gameplay. You can use the likes of Shockwave, Java or Flash to aid your efforts, and games can be single and/or multiplayer.

NON INTERACTIVE

Your mission: to produce a two minute long piece of programming, which must be rendered in real-time. We'll be looking for stunning visuals that'll snap game geek's pants elastic at 50 yards. Sound can be included but no marks will be deducted from entries without. Remember that no pre-created FMV footage can be used - everything must be rendered on the fly so to speak. Also, bear in mind that this category need not only be about graphical effects - it can also be used to demonstrate Artificial Intelligence (ie a non-interactive demo showing predators chasing prey around in a realistic fashion).

PRE-RENDERED ANIMATION

Your mission: a sub category of the above, this is an opportunity to produce the ultimate in eye candy - a short animation which lasts no longer than three minutes. 3D modelling can be pre-rendered and set to music.

ADAPTATIONS AND CONVERSIONS

Your mission: one for all you mod-kings out there - to submit game conversions or adaptations of existing games. This can include level designs for a game or the use of commercial game engines. Re-makes of existing games is allowed (ie new level designs for *Quake* etc.) While there are no restrictions on runtime or file size, try and keep the entries short and be sure to wow us from the start or we'll go to the pub instead. Finally, make damn sure that you're not infringing on someone's copyright and remember that any conversions/adaptations that are developed are for this competition only and aren't to be published, duplicated or copied in any form. Whatsoever.



This is Nick Ferguson, a one man team signed up to the competition. And two chicks.



The 'crazy' guys at Cheeky Monkeys are one of the teams to have entered the competition. In real life they're better known (among their friends) as a winning pub quiz team...

CONCEPT DESIGN

Your mission: Got a game idea which is burning a hole in your brain? Fret not, we want you to get it out of your system and produce a drawing board design for it. You can include storyboards, concept sketches, diagrams and details of the game's construction/design but please keep it down to five sheets of A4 paper and no longer than 500 words. In other words, no dull 50 page novellas detailing the game's characters or else we'll turn up on your doorstep with baseball bats and Charlie Brooker. Ultimately, you will need to produce a strong concept, which will be judged on its unique selling points, originality and commercial value.

“Giving talented individuals exposure to the industry and to the media”

As well as the above, we'll also be dishing out non-category awards including the People's Choice, Commercial Potential, Greatest Originality and an Overall Winner. There is a £10 registration fee (£5 for the Concept Design Category) to be made payable to The Prince's Trust and the deadline is on September 22. The awards ceremony itself will be held in late October in London where the winners (and the losers) can get drunk and fall over with the PC ZONE team. As long as you're buying the rounds.

And, lest we forget, there's the small issue of the all-important prizes. The Overall Winner prize is a

Teams

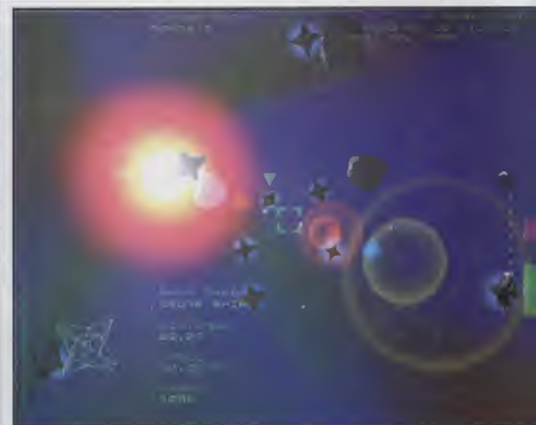
theta	add member
hotshot	add member
e2 20 studios - mitsubachi	add member
slick	add member
Dynamic World	add member
Dynamic World	add member
Fractal Design	add member
FNC Corporation	add member
C205 development studios	add member
cubicapril	add member
Reality	add member
Eldritch Studios	add member
utopia	add member
dansgames	add member
Other Worlds	add member
The Chilli Don Experience	add member
The Pigeon Coop	add member

The competition is already hotting up – some 130 teams have registered so far. We suggest you get cracking.

trip for four to the Games Developers Conference in the US in Spring 2001 to mix and mingle with the finest minds in the games business. Other prizes are yet to be confirmed but are likely to include a mass of hardware and cash goodies.

So, that's it – the gauntlet's been thrown down. Time to pick it up and amaze us...

★ Some of the top entries will be included on a future PC ZONE coverdisk. For more details on the competition, technical specs, and lots of advice from top game designers, drop in on www.gameswire.com/awards



An entry in the Open category, Dawn is a 3D space-combat shoot 'em up drawing its influences from the likes of Quake and the classic arcade blaster R-Type. It offers both single and multiplayer gameplay in a fast-moving gaming environment...

PCZONE

Codemasters

INTERACTIVE



A mass of industry pundits will be judging the event...

DEUS EX

QUESTION EVERYTHING

Maybe it is.

www.deusex.com



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OUT AUGUST 2000

EIDOS INTERACTIVE



Another one bites the dust.



I'm starting to detect a pattern here.



Bet he's next.

JETFIGHTER IV TAKES OFF

The Yanks need our help. Again

Talking of the '80s (*We were? – Ed*), if one game could ever be said to have revolutionised the flight sim genre it was *Jetfighter*. Taking all of the good things about flight sims (ie the weapons), this airborne classic wrapped them around true Hollywood-style action. *AmigOr* fans still hoist it up as a classic to this very day.

Take 2 Interactive is hoping to reinvent the series for the new millennium with *Jetfighter IV: Fortress America*. As with all

the others in the series, the West Coast has been invaded (probably by commie pinko subversives or some other outdated stereotype) and it's up to you and a trusty group of all-American lantern-jawed fighter jocks to stop them.

Take to the skies in F-14 Tomcats, F/A-18 Hornets and F-22 Raptors across 30 different missions, although the pre-release material seems to consist of nothing but F-14s exploding, so you

might be wise to steer clear of that particular ageing bird.

Among the 30 or so dynamically changing missions in the main campaign are such delights as the ever-popular 'Shoot Down The Cruise Missiles Before They Blow Up The Golden Gate Bridge' and the never dull 'Landing On A Moving Carrier At Night While Leaking Fuel' – all of which reinforces the point that the emphasis is firmly on action rather than

simulation. There's also a full range of instant action and co-op or deathmatch multiplayer options on offer.

The setting for the game is 50,000 square miles around San Francisco, and developer Mission Studios is using satellite maps of the region in order to recreate the area in never-before-seen levels of detail. Will they pull it off? We'll let you know when the game is released in October.

EVERYTHING THAT GLISTENS...

As well as providing a safe means of correcting bugs in retail titles, the Internet is also an excellent way of updating older titles for free. *Soldier of Fortune* is the latest game to get the facelift, and, in plans outlined by Raven Software, *SoF Gold* should be released some time in August.

As well as correcting most of the bugs that have been found in the original game, the Gold update is going to introduce two new deathmatch team modes, 20 new multiplayer maps and loads of new models. More exciting is the promise of new bots for offline deathmatching. Apparently the AI is extremely impressive, although Raven would say that. We're keeping our fingers crossed until we see code running.

What we do know is that after reviewing the recent *AvP Gold* release, an update that Fox was charging full price for, it's refreshing to see that in the game's industry there is still such a thing as a free lunch. You can expect to see the Gold update on a future CD and we'll also give you a shout as soon as it's available to download from the Activision website. Nice one, Raven.



Very soon you won't need friends to commit gross acts of violence on.



PRIMA GAME GUIDES

If you're having problems with a game and we haven't published a walkthrough you can bet your bottom, middle and top dollars that Prima has. Some poor sod even had to

play through the entire sorry debacle of *Daikatana* just to help the nine or so kids that were foolish enough to buy the game and not take it back.

All the Prima Strategy Guides are officially sanctioned by the publishers, which means you can be sure that the information is going to be correct. They're also packed with screenshots, so you can instantly locate your position in the game without scouring every sentence with a magnifying glass. In a bid to spread the happy word throughout the whole of the world, we've got 20 guides to give away; ten for *Shogun*, the superlative new strategy trend-setter, and ten for *EverQuest*, the game police have to thank for keeping Chris Anderson off the streets and away from physical contact with real people.

All you have to do, as usual, is answer the following question:

Which game does Chris Anderson spend most of his waking time playing?

A) Twister B) Apple Bobbing C) EverQuest

Send in your answers on a postcard to **PC ZONE**, Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford, BD15RZ, with the following details:

★ Title/Forename/Surname/Address/Postcode/Daytime phone number and e-mail address

★ Please indicate on the postcard if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers from companies other than Dennis Publishing Ltd.

★ Please indicate if you are under 18 years of age.

★ CPCZ009B

★ Terms and conditions: Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. And all that. Phew!



SET PHASERS™ TO FRAG



The Quake III Arena™ engine provides detailed, curved surfaces aboard Borg cubes and other beautifully-rendered ships.



Team AI is made seamless by the Quake III Arena™ engine. Characters react, adapt, and give their lives for a common goal.



Hi-tech weapons make for incredible firepower, as you frag the Borg with brutal blasts of defiance.

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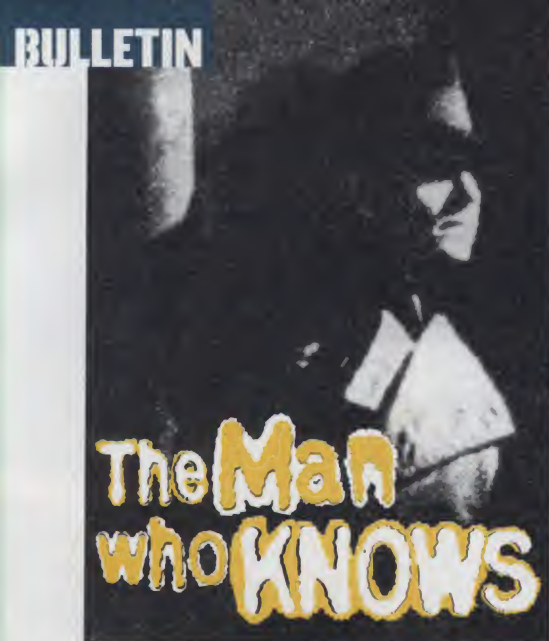
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SAME OLD, SAME OLD

Eidos is up for sale, and a slew of other publishers have been expressing their disinterest. The most popular choice for a buyer would appear to be French giant Infogrames, although chairman Bruno Bonnell has predictably denied that any deal is imminent. His take on the situation is thus: "Rumour is strong, it is a wave that is difficult to master, but I want to say to all of you that have been reading about so-called secret boardroom meetings: all this information is false." We'll take that as a yes then.

Still with Eidos, the latest Lara Croft model, Lucy Clarkson, has spoken out in defence of suggestions that she is nothing but a 16-year-old temptress whose role is cynically engineered to fuel the masturbatory fantasies of millions of adolescent boys. The Rotherham-born model protested: "To set the record straight, I'm 17, not 16."

Still far too young to remember the inaugural copy of *2000AD* then, the highly influential weekly that has been bought, lock, stock and indeed barrel, by Oxford-based super-developer Rebellion. The outfit behind such titles as *Alien Vs Predator* has quite literally made the acquisition of the year (think about it), and the purchase from publisher Egmont International will see Rebellion assume creative control of the magazine's content. This of course opens the door for all manner of game-related tomfoolery and Rebellion's chief executive officer, Jason Kingsley, bragged: "*2000AD* is not only a goldmine of intellectual properties, it is also a hugely enjoyable read. We are looking forward to helping this top quality publication to achieve its fullest potential. As fans of the galaxy's greatest comic, we will do everything within our powers to make sure that *2000AD* reaches its widest possible audience on Earth before we expand into other galaxies - ridding the universe of all thrill-sucker infestations along the way, of course."

The comic also has a new editor, Andy Diggle, who shouted: "This is a very exciting time to be taking over the editorship of *2000AD*, with a new look and a new owner. There is so much untapped potential within our universe of characters that the sky's the limit in terms of licensing and branding." No, it isn't.

And finally, Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails is considering scoring the music for the new version of *Doom*, following his guttural groaning on the first *Quake*. The greasy rocker admitted: "I would do something like that mainly because it's a hobby of mine, I appreciate the technology and it's fun to work outside Nine Inch Nails once in a while. *Quake* was fun because they didn't want hard-rock goofy music going through the game, it was all about atmosphere at the time." Reznor opted out of *Quake III*, claiming that it would be prostituting his talent. What talent's that then, you lank-haired mess?



THE WORLD'S DUMBEST GAMES TITLES

The *World's Scariest Police Chases* is turned in to a manic driving game

Every time you think TV programmes have reached the pinnacle of brainless stupidity, Channel 5 or Sky One do their damndest to prove you wrong, either making their own or importing them from the US. *The World's Scariest Police Chases* is one such bastion of dim-witted Americana, the kind you're meant to watch slurping some corn-chow and a can of Budweiser while polishing your sawn-off shotgun and chuckling like Cletus The Slack Jawed Yokel. And now it's being made into a game by Fox Interactive. Looking like a souped-up cross between *Driver* and *Midtown Madness*, *WSPC* casts you in the role of one of the high-speed chasing cops, driving through the massive fictional city of Ashland. The advantage of creating your own city is that you can shape it to fit the kind of car chases you want to make, ensuring

that there's never a dull street to drive through. The hundreds of CCTV cameras will turn Ashland into *The Truman Show* on wheels, where you'll be able to access footage of bank-robbers, joy-riders and deranged celebrity-seekers burning rubber on the asphalt. There are 50 missions in the game, which will involve escorting VIPs, time-critical emergencies and undercover surveillance. The biggest addition to previous driving titles though, is that you can play as the copper in the passenger seat and lean out of the window to spray bullets at escapees.

WSPC should be out in autumn, and will probably be followed by more TV conversions. And if you thought *The Sims* was a voyeuristic jump into fly-on-the-wall programmes, just think what would happen if they started making games out of *Airport* or *Driving School*. We shudder to think.

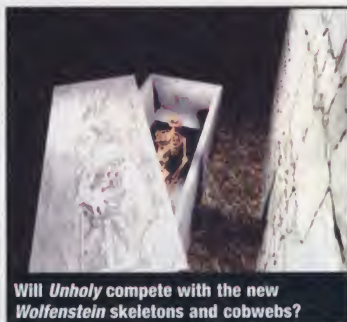
OUR MOST WANTED

Now that the dust has settled over E3 and we have recovered from a seamless succession of hang-overs, we can start getting excited about some of the games we saw with something resembling a clear mind. The showstopper was definitely *Alice*, but the return of the Duke is still the dream that haunts us most often. Thankfully, *Voyager* and *Black & White* are imminent, so not everything is a far away fantasy.

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1 Duke Nukem Forever (Infogrames) | 2001 |
| 2 Black & White (Eletronic Arts) | September |
| 3 Alice (Electronic Arts) | Christmas 2000 |
| 4 Return To Castle Wolfenstein (Activision) | 2001 |
| 5 Halo (Take 2 Interactive) | TBC |
| 6 Escape From Monkey Island (Activision) | November |
| 7 Voyager: Elite Force (Activision) | August |
| 8 X-COM Alliance (Hasbro Interactive) | December |
| 9 Championship Manager 4 (Eidos) | 2002 |
| 10 Dungeon Siege (Microsoft) | February 2001 |

Oh dear, it isn't the *End Of Days* is it?

The lady in white. She must have left the oven on.

Will *Unholy* compete with the new *Wolfenstein* skeletons and cobwebs?

UNHOLIER THAN THOU

OtherWorlds Interactive is developing one of the most promising first-person shooters we've seen for ages, *Unholy*, an immersive horror story with more than a hint of *Realms Of The Haunting* about it. Although we've been promised enough action to keep our trigger fingers happy, it will be as much an adventure game as anything else. To make sure it's as realistically scary as possible, the team is putting a lot of time into the AI, introducing random behaviour patterns as well as the usual scripted ones. Music and sound effects will contribute to the atmosphere in the way that the best horror games can, and your enemies will be dosified enough to avoid it becoming a no-brainer blastathon. As for the story, there are elements of apocalyptic doom and gloom and long buried evils returning for the new millennium. You're probably thinking *X-Files*, *Nocturne* and *Alone In The Dark*, and you wouldn't be far wrong. As you embark on your psychic investigations you get to explore ancient Egyptian ruins and haunted houses and, more importantly, you get to solve supernatural puzzles and shoot creatures of the night in the head. Which is exactly what we wanted to hear. OtherWorld is using the Jet3D engine (an offspring of the Genesis3D), described as a hybrid between the *Quake III* and the *Unreal* engines, to power the game, so it will probably look as good as anything else out there. It should be out towards the end of the year, when it will be able to prove itself against the likes of *Duke Nukem Forever*.

TICKER TAPE

STARTS++ Illusion Softworks, of *Hidden & Dangerous* fame, is going to bring Rambo to life in a brand new license. We asked them when we'd see it, but they told us not push them. **++STOP++** Another add-on for *EverQuest* has been announced. Called *Scars Of Velious*, it will add new character graphics as well as some snow-themed creatures. Chris Anderson is already stocking up on thermal underwear. **++STOP++** Anyone interested in beta testing the online side of *Settlers IV* should sign up quick. But remember you have to be over 18 to enter. **++STOP++** *Nox* is to be expanded with a free add-on pack that is set to include a new co-operative mode of play. **++STOP++** Miramax has bought the rights to make a film of American McGee's *Alice*. We're yet to find out whether it will be a cartoon, a live action or a Tim Burton *Nightmare Before Christmas* type of film. But it's certainly going to be closer to the surrealist version by Czech Jan Svankmajer than the one by Disney. **++STOP++** *Resident Evil* main man Shinji Mikami has confirmed that the film of the game is still in production. **++STOP++** And finally, news reaches us that the *Tomb Raider* film could be the first of a trilogy. Who said Lara Croft was trying to rip off Indiana Jones? **++ENDS++**

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

The latest news on games that have been delayed



Colin McRae Rally 2 is gearing up for a September release.

COLIN McRAE RALLY 2

LAST SEEN PCZONE #91

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE Spring 2000

NEW RELEASE DATE September/October 2000

If you're a PlayStation owner, then you've probably realised that *CMR2* has already made an appearance on that format. If, like us, you had hoped to see the PC version pretty much straight after its console release, you'll be disappointed to hear that we're still in for a bit of a wait. The September/October release date (so probably October then) is thanks to the delays caused by the PlayStation version. However, this prolonged wait for one of the most hotly anticipated rally games of all time could have its advantages. The developers are currently working on more styles of two player races in the arcade mode. So while we're just going to have to be patient, we should, as ever, have a far superior version of the game on our hands than PlayStation owners. Makes you proud to be PC owner, doesn't it?

CARMAGEDDON: TDR 2000

LAST SEEN PCZONE #91

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE May 2000

NEW RELEASE DATE September 2000

Have you read a review of *Carmageddon: TDR2000* recently? Have you been amazed by what you've read? Have you rushed to the shops to buy a copy, only to find there isn't one there? Funny that. Maybe it's got something to do with the fact that the game isn't finished yet, in fact, the code we were given over a month ago wasn't even reviewable. We're not going to see *TDR2000* for a couple of months yet, because the developers are getting rid of the bugs and trying to improve the Internet gameplay. So, if you've read any definitive *TDR2000* reviews recently, perhaps you should take them with a heavy dose of cynicism. Rest assured though, when the game's finished, we'll tell you exactly how it plays.



10 points, dead ahead.

SIMON THE SORCERER 3D

LAST SEEN PCZONE #87

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE June 2000

NEW RELEASE DATE November 2000

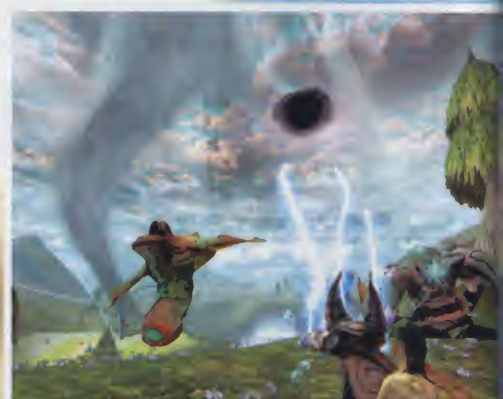
Yet more delays for Hasbro's keenly awaited adventure game, which has now slipped to November, as the game is feverishly tested to iron out any remaining bugs. Perhaps this delay isn't a bad thing. When you consider the lack of decent adventure game titles over the last couple of years, it's better to wait an extra couple of months than get your hopes up, and be disappointed by a rushed product.



Go and stand in the corner, you dunce.

HOTSHOTS

A sneak peek at the spectacular new wizardry game





SACRIFICE

★ Interplay — Out winter 2000

Watching a film at the cinema is always better than watching it on TV. Likewise playing a game on a 44in screen has much more impact than playing on a 14in monitor. We have played *Sacrifice* on such a screen and it is truly breathtaking to say the least, although quite frankly, we'd rather have the monitor than the game. Unfortunately, Shiny wouldn't let us take either when it showed us *Sacrifice*.

Still, at least we have a cracking game to look forward to. But what is it? Well the closest we could come to pigeon-holing the game was a cross between *Magic & Mayhem* and *Black & White* — one a classic and the other destined to be. A 3D real-time strategy game, *Sacrifice* has you as a young wizard, with the choice of one of five gods for you to align yourself with. Spell casting and combat rather than traditional resource management is the order of the day, and as such there are dozens of spells to cast and more than 50 creatures to summon.

So far that may sound pretty simple, but what you may not have known is just how spectacular the game looks. Spells can summon forth hundreds of winged demons, swirling tornadoes and earth-splitting tremors that crack open the ground and spew lava across the darkening land. Mountains are raised at the flick of a wrist and whole armies can be seen getting in close and personal. On a 44in screen, it was quite a sight to behold. For those of us with more modest displays, the whole lot will appear just a little bit smaller.



MAILBOX



There must be something in the water. Doom and gloom is prevalent in this month's Mailbox. Read it and weep

★ ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

Write to us, and if your letter is selected as Letter Of The Month we'll send you a prize.

WRITE TO Mailbox, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our Website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

For the next few issues of PC ZONE, we will be giving away a Microsoft IntelliMouse to everyone who gets a letter printed in Mailbox. These digital rodents are perfect for 3D shooters and games that require a quick and precise response from your pointing device – you can even use them with Windows 98 if you really want to. So get your writing skates on and send us your literary masterpieces. We promise not to be rude when we reply to them. Well, not very.



WORLD GONE MAD

I am a student of philosophy (reader reaches for 'delete' button) with an interest in computer games. Alright, an obsession. I've been following the progress of online games in the pages of your magazine, and have a question you might be interested in. If you look at the current crop of these titles, such as *UO* and the upcoming *World War II Online*, the trend is towards various genres combining, to form a kind of 'übergame'. While many would view this as a good thing, is it really a clever idea? It is fair to assume, given our current rate of technological expansion, that, within the next 10-20 years, the online world will develop into a true world, by the amalgamation of all games into one. Naturally, this world would be far better than the real thing, and it is easy to imagine a large proportion of Earth's population becoming hopelessly addicted, like some of the more permanent inhabitants of *UO*. This cyber-reality would doubtless be better than reality, and would probably eventually take over. But there is a problem. While this may appear to be every geek's dream (come on, you must have thought of it

before), one cannot become too divorced from reality. If, while we're all plugged into our Pentium XIs, a large comet appears on a collision course with Earth, we're all screwed, because Bruce Willis will be far too busy playing *Quake V*. But how can we convince people to return to reality, when reality is, let's face it, crap? I'm not a doom-monger, (well, of course I am, in a small way) but perhaps we should think before creating a world better than the real thing. What do you think?

Adam Bell

★ I don't know what you think is so crap about reality (apart from England diving out of Euro 2000 in an embarrassing fashion). It depends on the individual, I suppose. And no, I don't think computer games will ever provide an alternative to real life. Girls, football, beer, I rest my case.

HELP I'M CRAP

That does it, I give up. After reading your new online gaming section I finally decided to take the plunge and try my hand at online gaming. So off I went and bought myself a copy of *Unreal Tournament*. After installing it, the anticipation grew as I watched a list of available games form on my screen. I selected one and, bingo, I was online gaming. Now, at 30 years of age, I don't consider myself over the hill, although my gaming skills could probably be better, but after spending an hour and a half achieving exactly zero kills and being constantly abused, and in one case having everybody else in the game join forces against me, I gave up. Next up came *Diablo II* and the pattern repeated itself, even when the game was supposed to be co-operative.



The *Quake* online elitist brigade don't take kindly to newcomers. The tits.

Is it just me, or do you have to be some sort of gaming God before you are accepted in the online community? I don't have time to spend all day playing these games to become some sort of razor-sharp killing machine. In the case of *Diablo II*, all I wanted was a co-operative adventure but even this, it seemed, was too much to bear for everybody else. If everything had gone smoothly I would have considered something like *EverQuest* as I am partial to a bit of role playing but, if the same attitude exists with this game, I might as well not bother, especially as you are charged a monthly fee for the honour. I am interested in a gaming experience that does not involve every-man-for-himself killing sprees but a bit of co-operative team play. Capture The Flag etc I here you cry, I tried it and was roundly abused for being crap. Until this macho attitude disappears I will give up trying to play online.

Andrew Bisp

★ The online community, just like real life, has more than its fair share of morons. First-person shooters, in particular, tend to attract them in droves. If you are more into co-operative play, then *EverQuest* should be right up your street, since you

have to work with other people to get anywhere in the game. Yes, it has a monthly fee, but the first month is free, so give it a go and see how you get on.

A RETRACTION

Having awaited the release of *Vampire: The Masquerade – Redemption* for several months, and being a regular long-time reader, I, of course, snatched up a copy of the August issue the moment I saw it on the shelves, eager to read the review (and was glad to see the game measured up to, and indeed exceeded, its hype).

However, I was extremely disappointed by the comments made in the "Fang UK" section. As a *Vampire* table-top player of many years, I was glad to see you point out that it's "just a game like any other" – I'm sure role players out there remember the 'bad old days' when the popular media viewpoint was that RPGs led to devil worship, psychological imbalance and so on, and are happy this view has changed. I was then horrified to see reviewer Mark Hill sling this exact kind of response at LARP (Live Action Role Play) instead.

While I mainly play the table-top *Vampire* RPG, I have attended sessions of *Vampire*



In the future, all games will look like this. Then again...

LARP. People do not run around "pretending to suck each other's blood" as Mr Hill puts it. People assume a character and act out that part, just as in the table-top version. Weapons (if any) carried by a character are merely props, no real weaponry is allowed and no physical violence takes place – physical conflicts are resolved around a mechanic based on scissors, paper, stone, and no violent physical contact is permitted. The game is limited to a private area, and great efforts are taken to prevent disturbing members of the public – only fake-looking weapons (eg bright green plastic water pistols) are allowed in any areas where a passer-by may see you, and walking about the streets in costume is heavily frowned upon.

To suggest that LARP "isn't sad, it's downright psychotic" is not only slanderous but also a dangerous and ill-informed comment.

I find it extremely disappointing that an otherwise excellent magazine such as *PC ZONE* would publish such an opinion, especially as computer gaming itself has recently come under fire for inspiring classroom shootings such as the Columbine incident in the States (see

apparently an old one and did not feature many members of the current team, for which we apologise. Also, Mark's throwaway comment was indeed meant as light sarcasm, but unfortunately some Live Action Role Players did not take it that way. As such, we apologise for any offence taken by the comment. We assure you that *PC ZONE* does not view LARP fans as psychotic and regret the tone used in the article. We also did not intend to imply that real weapons were used in this pastime. Although taken in context, this comment was clearly light-hearted, some people appear to have taken offence. *ZONE* readers wishing to know more about this activity should point their browsers at www.tremere.demon.co.uk

NOBODY'S PERFECT

I am writing to protest about Kedron's letter (*PCZ* 92) which ridicules the idea of video games being linked to violence by scapegoating the USA's liberal firearm control laws.

Kendron argues his case by comparing the USA to Japan. Japan has an exceptionally low crime rate

“Is it just me, or do you have to become some sort of gaming God before you are accepted in the online gaming community?”

ANDREW BISP, AFTER HIS TRAUMATIC ONLINE EXPERIENCE

<http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/1999/04/23/gamers/> for details, or <http://www.cnn.com/US/904/21/harris.profile.02/> for an actual example from CNN). I'm sure we'd all agree that playing games such as *Quake*, *Half-Life* etc, does not make you psychotic, so why does Mr Hill feel the need to tar another hobby with that brush? And if you meant your sidebar to be sarcastic, Mr Hill, sorry, but it doesn't come over that way. I'm sure that all the LARPer's out there (myself included) would like to see an apology from Mr Hill.

Rafe Ball

★ We've had a few letters about this. The photo we used for Fang UK was

for an industrialised nation, almost any crime prevention argument can be made by using Japan as a point of reference. The opposite result can be achieved by comparing the USA to Switzerland. Switzerland has national service in which the servicemen/women store their service weapons in their homes. These are military issue weapons such as H&K automatic rifles. Yet the Swiss enjoy some of the lowest crime levels in the EU.

Although in almost all cases of juvenile violence video games play a negligible part, there may be a small number of isolated incidents for which the industry may have to accept limited responsibility. Scapegoating



Are games to blame for violence in the USA? Probably not.

liberal gun control for the situation in the USA, in my opinion, undermines any credibility the industry has in being objective in such matters. Violence in the USA is a result of a huge number of complex social factors, although, if people like Kedron require an insultingly simple explanation, the USA has always been a violent society, the streets have always been awash with weapons and none of this seems very likely to change for the foreseeable future.

Arthur Bullock

★ The point, I think, is it is hypocritical of the Americans to point the finger at the games industry when it is so lax in its gun laws. I am not saying games don't play a minimal part in inspiring warped individuals to commit acts of violence, that may be true in some cases, but the argument works both ways.

MR CONFUSED

Mr Anderson, I was just wondering if you know what the thing that you are Editor for is actually called? Let me elaborate: over the course of the time that I have been a reader of your magazine, you have never actually called *PC ZONE* a PC Games Magazine. We've had PC Games Utopia, Nirvana, HQ, Heaven, Gala and so on – but never actually Magazine.

It's not that I'm being picky, no no – that just really gets on my tits.

CyK

★ Go away, silly person.

BIG BOX BOY

I read the article on the new DVD-style boxes with interest in last month's *ZONE*, and I felt I had to write in to voice my opinion. I don't know where Frank Sagnier and his people did their market research, but neither I nor any of my friends spend £30 on a game only to go and throw the box in the bin – I have more than 35 games, all of which sit proudly on a shelf, all in their original boxes.

The new DVD style cases may be functional, but how are they going to get all the required info onto the box? I mean, look at EA's boxes at present, they have all the technical info displayed clearly on the top of the box and all the necessary spiel on the back to sell the game. I'd like to see them fit all that onto a DVD case.

Sadly, I'm sure there's nothing to be done to change this new direction, but I personally shall miss the old days of boxes (remember the "wall of colour" of *Ultimas* 7 & 8), free gifts (*Ultima* again) and chunky flight sim

manuals (*EF2000*, *Falcon 4* etc, etc, etc). I'm not looking forward to rummaging around a shelf full of similar cases to find the title I'm looking for.

Andrew McMullan

★ DVD-style boxes must surely be a good thing. You say you don't want to rummage around the shelves to find the title you're looking for? If DVD-style packaging becomes the norm, then there is a much higher chance that the game you are looking for will be on the shelf in the first place since the whole room won't be taken up with huge boxes, making room for a larger selection of games on display. This, we think, is a good thing. ☑

Ⓜ Big boxes like this may soon be a thing of the past. Hurrah!





STARPEACE

THE PARALLEL DOMAIN

EPISODE I: THE RISE OF TYCOONS

Countdown to launch Nov 2000

The on-line gate to a parallel domain.

Earth is overcrowded, we have colonized the planet.

As a tycoon you start with \$100 million and must build your empire and help the planet grow.

The colony depends on you!

**Play on-line with thousands of others
in a persistent world!**

Lock the door and close your eyes, it's

ALONE

IN THE

Keith Pullin jets off to Paris for a spot of good old-fashioned horror

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Darkworks
PUBLISHER Infogrames
WEBSITE www.darkworks.com
OUT Christmas 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Cool flashlight effect
- ★ Very clever creatures
- ★ Extremely atmospheric
- ★ Excellent use of sound
- ★ Brilliant artwork and animation

The latest addition to the genre-defining *Alone In The Dark* trilogy shouldn't be written off as just another corporate sequel and neither should it be pigeonholed with scene-stealing impersonators like *Resident Evil* and *Nocturne*. Antoine Villette, co-founder and managing director of new Paris-based developer Darkworks and his team of 45 artists, programmers and designers have the ultimate reputation to uphold and they're in no mood to bodge it.

The whole thing's a fascinating story: Infogrames, original developer of the *Alone* games, and who is now publishing *Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare*, commissioned Darkworks (the remains of what was once Adeline Software and Delphine Software International) to program the fourth episode after liking the

style of some other stuff it was working on. So, Darkworks, without a single game to its name (yet rich in experience), now has the responsibility of bringing one of the most revolutionary series of the '90s, into the 21st century.

Pressure? Well, maybe just a bit. *Resident Evil* creator Capcom has made technical and gameplay advances in the horror action/adventure field that have for most people – in the absence of any *Alone In The Dark* – games set it at the top of the tree. For Antoine and his small team, outdoing the 100-strong army of developers at Capcom won't be an easy task. Although, as the buoyant Frenchman says: "We just have to come up with better ideas than them."

As a small team, that is more than possible. One of Darkworks' strong points is creativity. Its numbers consist of brilliant veterans who have worked on classic titles such as *Fade To Black*, *Flashback* and *Little Big Adventure*. When these guys get together around a table with some coffee and croissants anything is possible.

THE MYSTERY UNFOLDS

The plot of *Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare* goes along these lines: spook-basher Edward Carnby is called in to investigate a haunted house on a remote, gloomy island off the coast of

Maine, USA. Known as Shadow Island it's not the kind of place you'd want to spend your summer holidays. However, for Ed and his lovely new assistant Aline, it's just another day in the office. Reports of strange supernatural happenings are music to their ears, so armed only with a torch and walkie-talkies they head into the mansion to discover more.

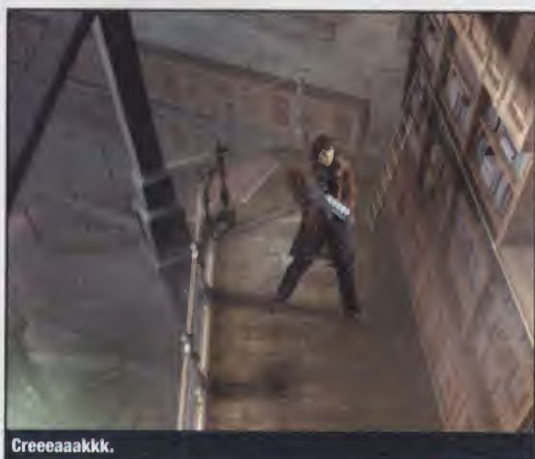
In all, the mansion takes up a mere 15 per cent of the game. Other areas to explore include underground caves, beaches, cliffs and even some kind of bizarre, alternate dimension. There are more than 120 locations in total. Amazingly, a team of artists painstakingly sketch each screen



DARKWORKS

Founded in 1998, Darkworks is basically a merger of the old French developers Delphine and Adeline Software. *Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare* is their first ever game under the Darkworks label, however, if you remember games like *Fade To Black* and *Little Big Adventure* you should be well aware of what they're capable of producing.

Darkworks currently only has one more game in development, *1906*. When that will see the light of day is anyone's guess.




Creeeeaaakkk.



Gene Simmons makes a rare guest appearance.

THE DARK: NEW NIGHTMARE



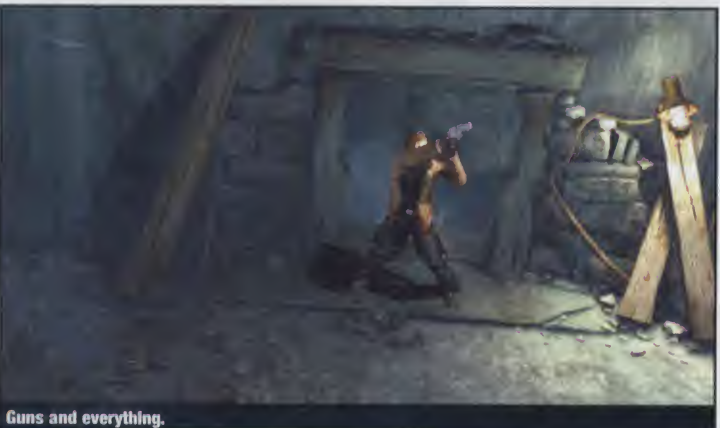
“If a screen doesn’t meet the strict Darkworks atmosphere requirements it is cast aside like an old sock”



The French developers are particularly proud of the torch.



How old is your sister?



Guns and everything.

before passing it over to the graphics department boys and girls to recreate in digital format. If a screen doesn't meet the strict Darkworks atmosphere requirements it is cast aside like an old sock. We were shown a wad of creepy drawings that never made it, yet, as far as we could see, there was nothing wrong with them. The influences of HR Geiger, HP Lovecraft and Dark Horse comics are clearly evident. Needless to say, the artwork that reaches the finished version will be of the highest calibre.

At the start of the game the player chooses who they want to be – Edward or Aline. Each character goes on a completely different adventure across the island, and the character that isn't picked still goes off on their particular mission under the control

explains: "All the story and all the gameplay is based on the opposition of light and dark."

As you probe around, shining the beam into various insalubrious crevices, it plays convincingly off walls, floors and ceilings and gradually dissipates into the distance along particularly long corridors or expansive areas. The effect has been achieved by attaching 3D meshes to the essentially 2D backgrounds. There is, in fact, a whole open-plan area of the office devoted to a team of coders who do nothing all day but attach wireframe maps to the backgrounds. It's a time-consuming job but somebody's got to do it.

Controlling the torch couldn't be easier. A handy 'freelook' mouse mode means you can point the damn

“The gameplay has been designed to wreak maximum havoc with your emotions and, as the title suggests, you'll find yourself alone and in the dark most of the time”

of the computer AI. There are absolutely no plans for a multiplayer game, although it was hinted that the follow up to this one might contain such delights.

As you play through the game you'll sometimes hear the other character shouting (or shooting) in the distance and occasionally they'll even bump into each other and exchange a few words before dashing off again on their macabre missions.

The gameplay and atmosphere have been designed to wreak maximum havoc with your emotions, and, as the title suggests, you'll find yourself alone and in the dark for the majority of the game, but it's not all bad. Your trusty torch is a wonderful thing. Not only can you use it to see where you are going, you can use it to frighten off or harm creatures. As lead developer, Emmanuel Boutin

thing wherever you want without changing the direction you're walking. This sets the scene for all sorts of heart-racing possibilities. Edward can be running for his life down a corridor while shining the torch behind him to try and rid himself of a relentless foe that's hot on his heels. Obviously, this means Edward can't see what's in front of him. It's a case of prioritising the risk, and it makes for some truly frightening moments.

Curiously as the game goes on, the torch becomes less and less effective against monsters, which means there's only one thing for it. Guns. And lots of them. In fact the amount of weapons available and the amount of monsters waiting to be shot has lead to some more interesting development ideas.

Pascal Luban, lead game designer, has his work cut out in trying to make

TIME TO DIE

The superb introduction to the game illustrates Camby's anger after he is told that one of his closest friends, Charles Fiske, has been found dead on Shadow Island.

Camby's investigation leads him to Fred Johnson who informs him of Fiske's search for the three ancient tablets that have the ability to unlock an incredible and dangerous power. Johnson pleads

with Camby to take the place of Fiske and reopen the investigation in order to recover the tablets.

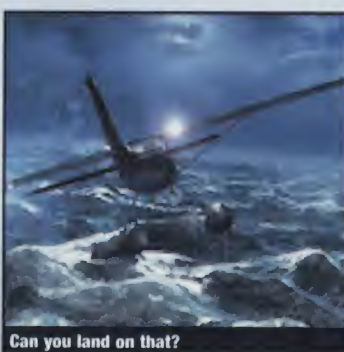
Camby accepts, leaps in a plane and travels to the island to find out what's going on.



What now?



Rigormortis? Is that serious?



Can you land on that?



No? Take me to the haunted mansion then.

the combat work: "There are so many possible parameters. What happens for instance if we have too much ammunition, or if one kind of ammo is too powerful, or we have too many monsters? After a while it becomes impossible to manage. So the idea was to divide the route, which gives me an idea of where the player stands at any moment in the game in terms of ammunition. The result is a curve just like that."

Pascal illustrates a graph with two intertwining lines meandering across a wall chart. Again it shows the lengths Darkworks has gone to in order to make the gameplay feel right. With much waving of arms and pointing, the Gallic game designer continues: "We've tried to apply a very cinematic approach to the game, and as in good movies there's a rhythm to the action, it's goes up, then down, it goes up again and so on. So the idea is you have a succession of waves that are getting stronger and stronger."

CATCH ME

Unlike *Resident Evil* the monsters in *The New Nightmare* are not simple zombies mindlessly plodding after

you. There are dozens of enemies ranging from basic wolves and spiders to more extreme creations from the bowels of hell itself. The informative Pascal continues with his one-man show: "We've tried to give a specific personality to each monster. With some, you turn on the light in a room and they'll just slowly go away. With others if you flash them with your light they'll just go crazy and attack you. This is part of the learning experience the player will have to go through."

Clearly, we are not dealing with a no-brainer horror action/adventure here. Other dastardly spooks even attempt to avoid your light completely by sensing your approach and stealthily moving around the screen to attack you from the side. The player needs to be on their toes and thinking for the entire game. Darkworks is hoping that this will install more emotion into the game. Fear, paranoia and isolation are the main emotional avenues the player will find themselves going down, and from what we've played so far, it's not too far off. Even shining your torch into a small cubbyhole under a set of stairs can set the heart racing.

TECHNO, TECHNO, TECHNO

Technically, *The New Nightmare* will be nothing ground-breaking, but it still contains the odd spark of techno-wizardry to act as confirmation that the series is now well and truly up with the times. Emmanuel explains: "We have about 400 frames of animation for the main characters; we have an interactive animation system for the fights and other effects for lightning and stuff like that. We built the engine from scratch

Q&A

STEPHANE BONAZZA



After a sweaty search of the building we managed to locate Stephane Bonazza, senior producer at Infogrames and the man responsible for ensuring everything goes to plan on the PC version of the game

PCZ Is *Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare* an attempt to get back the horror action/adventure crown that Infogrames themselves invented and then relinquished to the likes of *Resident Evil* and *Nocturne*?

STEPHANE No, not really. At the time *Alone In The Dark* was a mixture of very strong content and a huge leap in technology that we brought to the market. The *Resident Evil* series has taken a different path. They're very good games, but more gory, it's just zombies – it's less of an experience in terms of actually being frightened.

PCZ So, do you think that true horror is being scared of what you can't see, in other words, letting your own imagination create the terror?

STEPHANE That is the whole point of *Alone In The Dark* games. The language of fear is all different emotions. You must make sure that whatever sound you may hear, whatever place you are at, whatever door you are opening, you're going to be frightened because you are by yourself and you are in that place. And there's much more of that kind of thing in *Alone* than there is in *Resident Evil*.

PCZ *Nocturne* had a good stab at being scary, but unfortunately you had to have a high-spec PC in order to appreciate it. What sort of specifications are we looking at for *The New Nightmare*?

STEPHANE We are definitely looking at a hardware-accelerated version. If the

software version is beautiful, is not just of commercial value and plays well and gives you the creeps, we'll have that too. But so far our aim is a PII 300 with a 3D graphics card as the recommended computer.

PCZ Why did you wait for so long before doing the fourth instalment?

STEPHANE *Alone In The Dark* is one of the most important franchises we have at Infogrames. We decided to wait four years simply because we didn't find the right development team. If you look at this team and you see how they are, you think: "OK, they know what *Alone In The Dark* is." They did the monsters, they did the characters and they did the dimensions without asking anything. When they came to see us with that, we looked at it and thought: "That's *Alone In The Dark*." And that's what gave us the idea of doing a fourth one.

PCZ Apart from the *Alone* games, what were the major influences in the creation of *Alone In The Dark 4*?

STEPHANE Various influences really, a lot of the game is based on fears many people in the team have.

PCZ What's the scariest game you've ever played?

STEPHANE The HR Geiger thing... What was it? You know – the adventure game... er, and that game of the book... er, I don't know... Wait, I've got it! *I Have No Mouth But I Must Scream*. Oh, and *Resident Evil*.

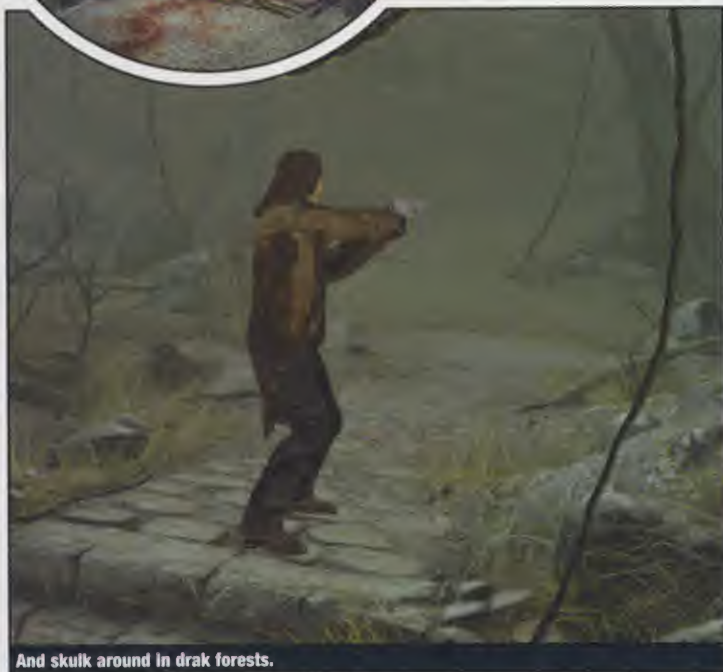
PCZ What's the scariest film you've ever seen?

STEPHANE *The Shining* comes to mind; it even had the scariest trailer of all time with all that blood. *The Blair Witch Project* is scary as well.

PCZ What do you think are the most important ingredients for a successful horror game?

STEPHANE Atmosphere – it can make even the most normal situations extremely scary.

Trash hotel rooms.



And skulk around in dark forests.



It's all in a day's work for our hero in *The New Nightmare*.

← and it is something quite new for *Alone In The Dark*."

Darkworks has also taken a long look at the other three games in the series to try and correct some elements that they felt were not quite right. One of these aspects is the interface. In keeping with the cinematic feel to the game, it has attempted to reduce the amount of time the player spends fiddling about in the inventory. Weapons and items can now be selected quickly and with ease, using the keyboard. Like Emmanuel says: "We don't want the player to have to keep going into the inventory, we want them to stay 'in the mood' as much as possible."

Ooh, those saucy French folk – always trying to get people in the mood.

There are other handy interface

👉 Tony Hart's new bedfellow.

adjustments, such as finding new objects. Emmanuel once again provides the explanation: "When you shine the light onto an object of interest it will sparkle a little. So you can decide whether or not to make the object shine depending on whether you want to make the game easier or harder. It is one more thing we can tweak until the difficulty is perfect."

There are certainly hints of LucasArts' *Grim Fandango* interface here as it means that useable objects should be easy enough to find, providing you keep an eye on where you are looking. Obviously, discovering a use for these objects is an entirely different story. But that's the way Darkworks wants it, and it's keen to point out that *The New Nightmare* is actually an adventure game with action elements to it.

It's about exploration more than anything. After all, when you first reach the mansion you don't have a clue what's going on. Only after encountering some

of the speaking residents (of which there are ten) does the story really start taking shape. And as with all good adventures there are many twists and turns along the way.

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

One of the most important aspects of any horror yarn is the use of sound. *The New Nightmare* won't disappoint. Antoine leads us into the sound studio to illustrate his point: "For the sound effects we went into graveyards, old houses and to the coast with a portable sound editor and recorded it all."

He asks a grinning sound engineer to do his stuff. He obliges by loading up *Cubase* and hitting a few keys to produce a series of blood-curdling screams, shrieks and groans: "There are about 450 different sound effects in the game and about 40 different ambient musical scores," shouts Antoine above the din. The engineer keeps the effects coming and then throws in a few eerie tunes. "We also have interactivity with the music, so if you are getting closer to a door and the music is getting louder and there are more instruments, you should be wary of going through."

Suddenly, there is silence again, at which point Antoine expresses the importance of silence in games, yet only at the right moment. *The New Nightmare* will feature plenty of this,

but it will tend to be when something dreadful is about to happen. Again, it's all about creating the right emotion for any one particular point in the game. He emphasises the point by explaining how subtleties can also make or break a scene: "We have about 60 different sounds for footsteps, we don't know if we'll use all of them in the end, but for me it's totally unbelievable to have the same footsteps throughout the whole game. We try to have some on the road, on the stone, on the carpet, in the water, on the grass... You know, something believable."

The final game should indeed contain a truly fantastic array of acoustic delights to inspire and ignite your fears.

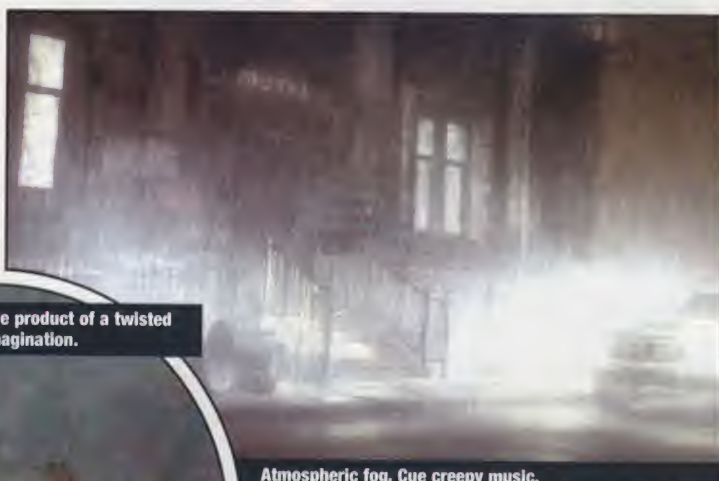
TIME FOR BED

The New Nightmare is due for release this Christmas. As we know, it's got some tough competition to take on, not only from *Resident Evil* and *Nocturne*, but also from other pending releases such as *Evil Dead* and *The Blair Witch Project*.

However, judging by the unified vision that Darkworks has for this game and after witnessing the efforts it is going to in order to make it worthy of its auspicious ancestors, chances are that this above everything else is the one that will take hell into gaming heaven. 📺



That's it, I'm leaving. I can't work under these conditions.



Atmospheric fog. Cue creepy music.



Durn't move, or ah vill shoot.



The product of a twisted imagination.



What do you mean I've got the wrong number?

Look for *The New Nightmare* around Christmas.AITD meets *Dr. Who*.

A scary old house, yesterday.



How dare you call me emotionless?

DARK DESTROYERS?

These are the games *Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare* will have to fend off if it stands any chance of regaining the coveted horror crown

RESIDENT EVIL (Capcom)

This was the game that basically took over the mantle of king of the horror genre in the absence of *AITD*. It featured a veritable army of zombies running amok through a small town in America. Originally a PlayStation game, *Resident Evil* is one of the few console games to make a successful leap to PC.



Ever the optimist.

RESIDENT EVIL 2 (Capcom)

The second offering from Capcom retained the fear factor of the first game, yet managed to convey a more adventurous feel. Still, it wasn't exactly *Grim Fandango* and in the end the same gore-seeking audience as the first fell for its hellish charms, despite being tagged as more of a thinkers game.



Dawn of the dead.

NOCTURNE (Take 2)

There's no denying that *Nocturne* is a worthy contender for the horror crown. It's good looking, scary and full of atmosphere. Unfortunately, strange camera angles occasionally obscure your view making fighting slightly tricky at times. The other major problem is that you need a very high-end PC to run it. Shame.



There's a stranger in town.

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECTS (Gathering Of Developers)

Terminal Reality, Human Head, and Ritual are the developers charged with using the *Nocturne* engine to bring the Blair Witch myth to life in this three-game PC series. *Blair Witch Volume 1: Rustin Parr* is the first instalment from Terminal Reality, and it already looks suspiciously like *The New Nightmare*. Look out for it this Christmas.



Guns and the Blair Witch?

EVIL DEAD (THQ)

With a voiceover by cult hero Bruce Campbell, star of the *Evil Dead* trilogy, this horror yarn is sure to attract a few fans of the film. Environments include settings from the films, and the gameplay is set to include hours of zombie dismemberment. Could be one for gore fans but not necessarily for fright fans. Again, look for it this Christmas.



"Take that you beast."

Trekkies get ready, it's time for...

STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Raven Software
PUBLISHER Activision
WEBSITE www.ravensoft.com
OUT August

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ The first *Quake III*-driven single-player FPS
- ★ See above
- ★ It's from Raven
- ★ Voyager universe accurately recreated

When *Quake III* was released last Christmas the shit, as expected, hit the fan. It split the gaming community right down the middle by dropping the single-player experience in place of pure, fast deathmatching. We play *Quake III* in the office over a LAN and it's



RAVEN GAMES

Elite Force will be the first sci-fi shoot 'em up from a US developer usually over fond of spells, trolls, and bodkins

1987 *Black Crypt*: An Amiga RPG game in a – '88 *Dungeon Master* style.

1993 *Shadowcaster*: powerful *Wolfenstein*-engineed RPG with shape shifting. So so.

1994 *Heretic*: "Doom in tights."

1995 *Hexen*: another Tolkien-esque take on the first-person shooter genre with hubs. Good.

1997 *Hexen II*: Trolls and spells with the *Quake* engine. Colourful.

1998 *Heretic II*: Third-person perspective *Tomb Raider* with spells. Good fun.

2000 *Soldier Of Fortune*: Ultra violent take on the right-wing pro-gun mag from America. Great game, terrible AI.

Can Raven Software prove that a *Star Trek* license doesn't have to end in tears? Dave Woods looks at 7 of 9 and starts crying anyway

fantastic, but most of you aren't so lucky. Try playing over the Internet with a 56K modem and you'll have less chance of staying alive than a Christian in the lion paddock of London Zoo.

It's a damn shame because the *Quake III* engine has been universally heralded as the best in the world. But take heart; as *Quake II* begat single-player classics such as *Half-Life*, the *Quake III* engine is already sitting at the heart of some juicy-looking titles and the first of these, *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force* is due out any time now.

If you're a Trekkie then that's all you need to know. The thought of a first-person shooter based in and around the Voyager universe and utilising the *Quake III* engine is probably enough to make you want to organise a convention, dress up in funny costumes and attempt the Vulcan salute. The fact that the Voyager ship has been accurately mapped, giving you the chance to wander around interacting with your heroes, is probably too much for you to bear.

For the rest of us, the following details should be enough to get the juices flowing.

Firstly, most *Star Trek* games have been utter shite, but this one won't be because it's being developed by Raven Software, who has proved its pedigree with the likes of *Hexen*, *Heretic* and most recently, *Soldier Of Fortune*. Raven has very close links with id, so you can expect its heavily modified *Quake III* engine to look the business. The new level of detail mode is one enhancement; when you're up close

to others, the level of detail is high. Move further away and the level of detail drops, only you won't be able to tell the difference. It means the game can handle more characters on screen at any one time.

In terms of story, you play

Alexander or Alexandria Munro (PC or what?), part of an elite security team headed by Lt. Tuvok, trained in infiltration, combat, stealth, and weapons usage, but more adept at leeching over 7 of 9. This all goes tits up when the Voyager gets captured by a strange alien species and dumped in an old ship graveyard called the Forge. Your mission is to free Voyager and escape. Unfortunately, a lot of other ships in the knackers yard have got the same idea. Cue loads of fighting on various ships, including Borg Cubes and Klingon Birds of Prey.

time. A source at Raven said that a phaser has about 12 shots before it becomes useless, which obviously brings new tactics into play (the shit-yourself-and-run-when-you-realise-that-you're-about-to-be-assimilated school of thought). Luckily, 7 of 9 has developed a weapon that uses a constantly changing frequency to outwit the man-machines. Unluckily, it hasn't been tested in a live situation, which is where you come in.

In all, the game will feature nine different weapons, including standard issue and newly issued Federation weapons, along with alien weapons that you'll need to learn how to use in order to survive. And yes, there are alternate fire modes for some of them, and yes, there is a sniper rifle. Woo-hoo.

Is it going to be a *Half-Life* beater? After all, this is still the standard that others have to attain. Hand on heart



"Your mission is to free Voyager and escape. Unfortunately, lots of other ships in the knackers yard have the same idea. Cue loads of fighting..."

According to Raven, about a quarter of the game will take place on Voyager itself, with the rest scattered between alien ships and space stations. There are no terrain levels – remember this is the *Quake III* engine we're talking about and it's extremely agoraphobic.

BEYOND BORG

I'm not a huge *Star Trek* fan, but I watch it when it's on and I've been heavily taken by the Borg, especially the sultry queen head-and-body combination thing. The big Borg 'thing' is that it can adapt to technology, so every weapon you use against it is only effective for a short

I'd say probably not, but I want to be proved wrong. Raven is talking the talk with its ICARUS Scripting System, which means that the interactive elements of the game can handle multiple paths, unlike *Half-Life* where you are shoved down a linear route. So, if a crew member is being grabbed, you can rescue him, not rescue him, or even kill him yourself. We haven't seen this working but it sounds promising. Anyway, the shakedown should happen next month when, with any luck, we'll have the exclusive demo on our cover CD, followed by an exclusive review in the magazine as soon as finished code is available. [P]



"Excuse me, have you seen 7 Of 9?"



Shoot first, ask questions later.



You're a great big wuss.



All the *Star Trek* cast and crew are present and correct.

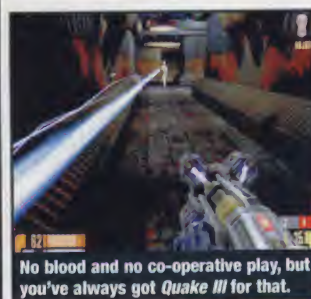


Prepare to be assimilated.

IT'S NO SOLDIER OF FORTUNE...

The heart of *Voyager* beats to a single-player rhythm, but no FPS would be complete without the multi-player element. Raven has encountered some problems here, down to the fact that Paramount is very fussy over its *Star Trek* baby. Raven: "Look at our amazing *Soldier Of Fortune* game. You can take limbs off with a single bullet before moving in with the knife and hac..." Paramount: "Do you know who we are?"

If you want to do a *Star Trek* game then the first rule is no blood. It gets the costumes messy. Raven has got round this by placing the deathmatch on a holodeck, where no one actually gets killed, just transported somewhere else in the arena. Cunning, eh? In another crushing blow, Raven also announced that there's going to be no co-operative multiplayer, which is the next Holy Grail as far as this genre is concerned. The good news is that you can play as almost any alien race, including the mysterious 8472.



No blood and no co-operative play, but you've always got *Quake III* for that.



See that man over there? Yes I see him.

Something you can't blow a hole in. You can drive it through walls though.



Collapse buildings and anyone inside them.



Find your opponents, blow a hole in the wall and kill 'em.



Blow a hole in the wall and divert the lava flow.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

RED FACTION

Dave Woods disappears into a dark room and discovers a whole new dimension

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Volition
PUBLISHER THQ
WEBSITE www.redfaction.com
OUT Q1 next year

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ FPS with a mix of stealth and action
- ★ Geo-Mod engine with deformable terrain
- ★ From the creators of the *FreeSpace* series
- ★ Land, sea and air vehicles

There were a lot of good games on show at this year's E3, but very little innovation. Take the first-person genre. We were privileged enough to get into id's back passage for an impressive display of *Wolfenstein's* AI capabilities and the new social skills of *Quake III Team Arena*, both looked excellent, but are just variations on an existing theme and don't add anything new or sensational. After leaving id, our behind-closed-doors look at *Unreal*

2 consisted of a brief technology demo of the *Unreal* engine, and there was absolutely no talk of *Half-Life 2*. (Although, industry rumours suggest that an official announcement might be made at ECTS later this year.)

On our way back from the Sierra stand we were stopped by an over-excited THQ representative. Grabbing us by the elbow and steering us through to a private enclosure he whispered E3's biggest cliché into our ears: "*Red Faction*. We're really excited about this game." It seemed a lot of other people were as well. We were shunted into a room the size of Ally McBeal's stomach and forced to watch a three-level demo of Volition's new FPS through the armpit of a sweaty American, who worryingly kept shouting "hell yeah" at the screen as the character blew a hole in the wall.

This is what's causing all the excitement: deformable terrain mixed with advanced physics (courtesy of the new Geo-Mod engine), which

means *Faction's* levels act as if they were real-world constructs. Through the mixture of sweat and grunting Americans this was the point that was drummed into our heads minute after minute after minute. And if Volition

“Using the thermal imager in your rocket launcher you can pinpoint opponents through walls...”

can get it working well then it could transform the genre.

We've just played around with the latest code and it all seems to work as advertised. In one level there's a lava flow pouring down a pipe, with a few carefully placed rockets it can be diverted to flow in order to help you tactically in the game. Using the thermal imager in your rocket launcher you can pinpoint opponents

through walls, bridges and towers and take them out by collapsing structures. It literally adds a whole new dimension.

And that's not all. You can also look forward to an immersive single-player storyline with equal dollops of stealth, and full-on action, complete with location-based damage, and Volition is promising a whole slew of land, sea and air vehicles to command; we've seen one so far, an APC equipped with a chaingun and a grenade launcher. Nice.

It all adds up to a pretty ambitious attempt to take the genre one step further, but if anyone can pull it off (so to speak), Volition can. Creator of the *FreeSpace* series, its master-coders are also responsible for *Descent 1* and *2*. *Red Faction* started out in life as *Descent 4*, but Volition quickly realised that what it wanted to do amounted to a completely new game. Keep an eye out for this one. It may well be big. **EW**

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 00/01

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Sports Interactive

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive

WEBSITE www.cm3.com

OUT November 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Bigger and better than ever
- Brings the experience closer to the real thing
- There's a reason *Champ Manager* always tops the charts

There is probably no other series of games that has had as much input from its fevered players as *Championship Manager*. It may be the Collyer brothers' baby,

Another season, another update. *Mark Hill* just can't seem to get enough

but thousands of people from around the world have had their say in the statistics, ensuring that the data is so accurate it's very near the real thing. As well as all the scouts, Sports Interactive is constantly soaking up the feedback and comments from fans and asking them what they would like to see in future versions. Cynics may bark at the incremental increases to what is essentially the same game, but they underestimate the impact all the small details have on the *Champ Man* experience. If you are anywhere near as fanatical about *CM* as we are, a quick look at the new features will make the 99/00 update you're playing at the moment seem like an empty school ground compared to the Maracana Stadium that November's version promises to be.

There are now no less than 26 leagues, all of which can run at the same time (provided you have enough memory, of course). The newcomers

include: Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Turkey, Greece, Russia, Poland, Croatia, Finland and Australia.

As well as full national sides you'll get the chance to coach B-teams and U-21s and, interestingly, you will be able to play a league using completely randomised fictional players. We don't

Newspapers will be more involved in spreading rumours and will approach you personally, so you'll have the chance to blame defeat on the ref. You can even take the matter further and complain to the FA about the officials. More importantly, the interaction with your own players will be much greater.

“Cynics may bark at the incremental increases to what is essentially the same game, but they underestimate the impact the small details have on the experience”

really see the point of that ourselves, but we're sure many of you will.

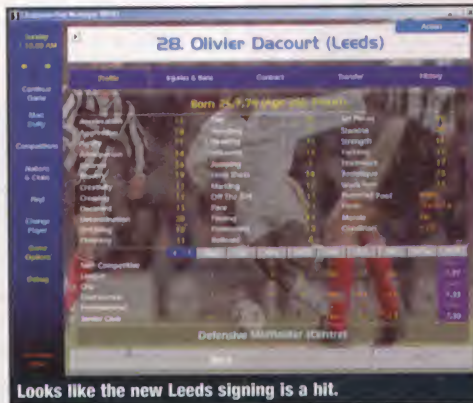
The transfer system, interface and match engine will all be tweaked, and there will now be a live league table that changes during match day as goals are scored around the country.

One of the biggest improvements will be the media involvement, enhancing the feeling of being in a real alternate footballing universe.

The game will ship with its own data editor and, although there's already a good one available on the Web, this should ensure that Sports Interactive doesn't delay the release date to keep up with the latest transfers. Of course, this is but the tip of the footballing iceberg and you can look forward to a full preview soon. As far as we're concerned, the sooner we can start playing this one the better. **CM**



Your staff can file more detailed reports on your players.



Looks like the new Leeds signing is a hit.



Give the FA a piece of your mind. Or something.



Watch your position change during a match.



Next: Australian Rugby League Manager.



Get a complete rundown of your team's stats.

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 - Actua Soccer 1, 2 & 3
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 - Andreotti Racing
 - Ants
 - Aron 51
 - Armageddon: Worms
 - Army Men Series
 - Atomic Bomberman
- B**
- Baldur's Gate
 - Batman Forever
 - Battlezone 1 & 2
 - Blade Runner
 - Blam, Machine Head
 - Blood
 - Braveheart
 - Brian Lara Cricket
 - Broken Sword 1 & 2
- C**
- Casual 1, 2 & 3
 - Cannon Fodder
 - Armageddon 1 & 2
 - Champ. Man. Series
 - Chasm: The Rift
 - Civilisation 1 & 2
 - Colin McRae Rally
 - Colonization
 - C&C Series
 - Commandos Series
 - Constructor
 - Croc
 - Crusaders of M&Mag
 - Cueball
- D**
- Dark Forces 1 & 2
 - Dark Reign
 - Day of the Tentacle
 - Deathtrap Dungeon
 - Delta Force 1 & 2
 - Descent 1, 2 & 3
 - Destruct. Derby 1 & 2
 - Diablo 1 & 2
 - Die By The Sword
 - Die Hard Trilogy 1 & 2
 - Dino Crisis
- E**
- Earth 2150
 - Earthworm Jim 1 & 2
 - Emergency
 - Empire Of The Ants
 - ESPN X Games: Pro B
 - Excalibur 2555 AD
 - Excessive Speed
 - Extreme Assault
 - Extreme Pinball
- F**
- F-22 Air D. Fight 2 & 3
 - FA F'ball Man. 2000
 - Fallout 2
 - Fatal Racing
 - FIFA Series
 - Fifth Element
 - Final Doom
 - Final Fantasy 7 & 8
 - Flight Sim '98
 - Flight Unlimited 1 & 2
 - Flying Heroes
 - Formula Series
 - Formula One GP
 - Forsaken
 - Frogger
 - Full Throttle
- G**
- Gabriel Knight 3
 - Gangsters
 - Gex
 - Goblins
 - Goosebumps
 - G-Police 1 & 2
 - Grand Prix Man. 2
 - GTA 1, 2 & London
 - Grand Touring
 - Grim Fandango
 - Ground Control
 - Gubble
- H**
- Half Life & Op. Force
 - Hardwar
 - Heavy Gear
 - Hercules
 - Haratic
 - Heroes of M & M 2 & 3
 - Heroes Quest
 - Hoxen 1 & 2
 - Hi Octane
 - Hidden & Dangerous
 - Homeworld
- I**
- Imperialism 2
 - Imperium Galactica
 - Incoming
 - Indiana Jones Series
 - Indianapolis
 - Int. Cricket Captain
 - Interstate 76 & Nitro
 - Iwar
- J**
- Jedi Knight
- K**
- Kingpin
 - Klingon Honor Guard
 - Knights and Merch.
- L**
- L of K: Soul Reaver
 - Lego Loco
 - Lego Island
 - Lego Racers
 - Lego Rock Raiders
 - Lemmings 2
 - Lemmings 3D
 - Links
 - Little Big Adventure 2
 - Lords of Magic: SE
- M**
- Machine Hunter
 - Madden NFL 97 & 98
 - Magic Carpet 1 & 2
 - Martian Gothic
 - Mass Destruction
 - Master of Orion 1 & 2
 - MDK
 - Mechcommander
 - Mechwarrior 2
 - Men in Black
 - Messiah
 - Midtown Madness
 - M&M: Mand of Heav
 - Monopoly
 - Monst Truck Mad 1 & 2
 - Mortal Kombat Series
 - Moto Racer
 - Motocross Madness
 - Motorhead
 - Myth
- N**
- Nascar 2
 - NBA Hangtime
 - NBA Jam Extreme
 - NBA Live Series
 - Need 4 Speed Series
 - NFL Quarterback Club
 - NHL Series
 - NHL Breakaway 98
 - Nightmare Creatures
 - Nax
 - Nuclear Strike
- O**
- Official F1 Racing
 - Operation Bodycount
 - Outcast
 - Outlaws
 - Outrun
- P**
- Pandemonium 1 & 2
 - Pharaoh
 - Pinball Fantasies
 - Pitfall
 - Planescape Torm.
 - POD
 - Police Quest: SWAT 2
 - Populous Series
 - Premier Man. Series
 - Prince of Persia
 - Pro Pinball
- Q**
- Quake 1, 2 & 3
- R**
- Railroad Tycoon 1 & 2
 - Rainbow Islands
 - Rainbow Six
 - Rally Champ. 2000
 - Rally Cross
 - Rayman
 - Redline
 - Requiem: Av. Angels
 - Resident Evil Series
 - Re-Volt
 - Rival Realms
 - Road Rash
 - Rogue Spear Series
 - Rollcage 1 & 2
 - Roller Coaster Tycoon
- S**
- S.C.A.R.S.
 - Sanatorium
 - Screamer 1, 2 & Rally
 - Sensible World of Soc
 - Settlers 1, 2 & 3
 - Shogo Mob. Arm. Div.
 - Shogun Total War
 - Sim City Series
 - Sim Theme Park
 - Sim Tower
 - Sims
 - SIN
 - Slave Zero
 - Soldier of Fortune
 - Sonic 3D Blast
 - Sonic & Nuckles Col.
 - Soul Reaver
 - South Park
 - Spac Ops
 - Spectra Core
 - Star Trek Series
 - Star Wars: Phantom Men
 - Star Wars: Racer
 - Star Wars: Force C.
 - Star Wars: Rogue Sqd
 - Star Wars: Shad. Emp.
 - StarCraft
 - StarLancer
 - Stonekeep
 - Street Fighter Series
 - Super Bubsy
 - Super Frog
 - Superbike World Ch.
 - Swat 3
 - SWIV 3D
 - Syndicate
 - Syndicate Wars
 - System Shock
- T**
- Tachyon: The Fringe
 - Take No Prisoners
 - Tarzan
 - Test Drive Series
 - Test Drive Offroad
 - The Curse of Monk. I
 - The Hunt for Red Oct
 - The Settlers 1, 2 & 3
 - The Sims
 - Theme Hospital
 - Theme Park
 - Theme Park World
- U**
- Ultima Underworld
 - Ulti. Soccer Man. 1 & 2
 - Unreal
 - Unreal Tournament
 - Urban Chaos
 - US Navy Fight. Series
- V**
- Vampire
 - Vigilante
 - Virtua Fighter
 - Virtual Springfield
 - Virus
 - VR Powerboat Racing
- W**
- War Games Deltan 1
 - War Gods
 - Warcraft 1 & 2
 - Wargasm
 - Warhammer
 - Warzone 2100
 - Wing Commander IV
 - Wipeout
 - Wipeout XL
 - Wolfenstein 3D
 - World Cup '98
 - Worms Series
 - WWF Wrestlemania
- X**
- X-Com Series
 - X Games Pro Boarder
 - X Wing
 - X-Files: The Game
 - X-Men Child. of Atom



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"Colour blind - moi?"



Dammit, the train's late.



After a hard day's espionage, a night at the opera is just the ticket.



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NO ONE LIVES FOREVER

Time to change your boxer shorts – there's another female icon on the way. **Alison Baker** goes undercover

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Monolith
PUBLISHER Fox Interactive
WEBSITE www.the-operative.com
OUT End of 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Superb LithTech engine
- ★ Multiplayer levels include Cooperative Assault mode
- ★ Supermodel ex-crim hero
- ★ Full range of vehicles, including snowmobile

Her name's Archer. Cate Archer. Or possibly Jane Bond. Anyway, you get the idea. Agent Archer is the feisty, sexy heroine of Fox Interactive's upcoming, first-person '60s-inspired, Bond-style action adventure, *No One Lives Forever*, and the men in suits are hoping that her name is going to become as familiar as that of a certain gun-toting, pigtail-swinging lady frequently glimpsed on boxer shorts. (I hasten to add that my experience of this is derived solely from window shopping). Game

companies are tuning into the fact that female cyber-icons mean big business, providing sex-symbols for male gamers and action role-models for girls: even as I write, my boyfriend (a fellow game addict) slavers over my shoulder, "will she have big tits like Lara?" Go away, you sex-obsessed moron. This is serious stuff. And, yes, I'm quite sure she will.

Developed by Seattle-based Monolith (of *Blood* and *Shogo* fame), *NOLF* is a story-driven adventure, set in the Cold War of the 1960s. You play Agent Cate Archer, a beautiful, but

weapons (more than 30 will feature in the game), and typically daft experimental gadgets, including a Robotic Poodle, exploding lipstick and lethal acid perfume. You also get the chance to ride motorbikes and snowmobiles and visit exotic locations such as Morocco, the Caribbean and a secret Russian space-station. All up it features 15 single-player missions and ten multiplayer levels, including Deathmatch and an innovative Co-operative Assault.

Fox searched the world for a suitable subject with attitude and

"You play Agent Cate Archer, a beautiful, but deadly ex-criminal turned spy, now an undercover operative working for the anti-crime organisation UNITY"

deadly ex-criminal turned spy, now an undercover operative working for the anti-crime organisation UNITY. Your goal, as per usual, is to uncover a sinister, world-threatening conspiracy and in true Bond tradition you get your manicured hands on the latest

stunning looks on which to model Agent Archer. After interviewing hundreds of delectable beauties (tough job, eh?) they came up with Mitzi Martin, former L'Oréal girl and Elite model, and used her body and features for the Agent Archer



cybermodel. Completely the reverse of Lara Croft, who started life as a pixelated character and has since been personified by a gaggle of wannabe starlets.

Developer, Monolith, also points out that, unlike Lara, Cate wasn't born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Delivered screaming into the world after a 20 hour labour, her mother died shortly after giving birth and Cate fell into a life of crime before turning full circle and working for the good guys again. Sounds like a feisty one, and because Monolith is involved we're expecting big things for Mitzi and *NOLF*. Its LithTech engine looks and plays like a dream, and we reckon it's about time it was behind a huge hit. Watch this space. **EW**



Just remember not to use this weapon underwater.



There are six mysterious environments for you to explore.



You fight underwater. Deep Fighter, geddit?



Send your enemies for a swim with the fishes.



Come back, I only want to be your friend.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

DEEP FIGHTER

A game about a violent man who quotes Confucius? Or an underwater action/adventure? Martin Korda dives in to find out

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Criterion Studios Ltd
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft
WEBSITE www.ubisoft.com or
<http://deepfighter.csl.com>
OUT September 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Eight vehicles with a selection of 22 weapons
- Up to 50 missions and sub-missions
- Eight-player deathmatch mode
- Six massive playing environments

We've had busty, gun-toting, arse-kicking brunettes. We've had daring archaeologists with a penchant for whips and a fear of snakes. We've had futuristic heroes, battling corrupt Big Brother governments in a fight to free a subjugated society. Now, get ready for the latest action/adventure hero. I give you... a mini-sub driving, army private. You heard me, I said, a mini-sub driving, army private. Not convinced? We weren't either, until we found out a bit about *Deep Fighter*. That's because there's a great deal more to the game than a slightly dodgy fish-smelling army new boy, who

spends his days studying the mating cycles of marine life.

Deep Fighter is, as you've probably already guessed, set under the ocean waves. You play an army cadet during a turbulent period of your society's history. Not only is your colony in danger from an imminent natural disaster, it's also being threatened by a strange and mysterious enemy, who are intent on wiping you out. Your job is to pilot your mini-sub in a series of missions ranging from fish breeding to locating and destroying enemy bases. While the former could be in danger of being a bit of a snorefest, the latter mission type promises to be a highly entertaining affair. With eight mini-subs to choose from and an arsenal of 22 weapons at your disposal, we think that the underwater dogfights in *DF* will provide plenty of excitement. You'll even have wingmen to help you out if you get into trouble. Ultimately,

➔ Pilot one of six different mini-subs.

your goal will be to protect your colony and its mining installations long enough to allow a giant mothership to be built, which will then transport your people to safety.

Although developer Criterion Studios is claiming *Deep Fighter* will be an action/adventure, from what we've seen so far, it would appear to bear a closer resemblance to *Descent* than to *Tomb Raider*. That's not to say that the game won't have adventure elements. Many puzzles will need solving as you navigate your way through the game's six unique environments (each of which will have their own mysteries and secrets to uncover), and some of which will be set above ground. You'll also have to complete a host of sub-quests, creating a total of more than 50 missions and sub-missions in all. It looks as though longevity and variety are two features that *DF* won't lack.

To round the package off, we're being promised 30 minutes of FMV, featuring professional actors. Lets just hope we don't see a return of the dodgy FMVs we were subjected to so

“To round the package off, we're being promised 30 minutes of FMV, featuring professional actors”

regularly a couple of years ago. There's also going to be a deathmatch mode, which will allow up to eight players to engage one another in underwater dog fighting.

As you can see, *Deep Fighter* is shaping up to be a very ambitious game, one which mixes dog fighting combat, resource management and adventure-style puzzles. Even though there are a couple of features that we're not yet 100 per cent confident about (such as fish herding), it is showing glimmers of promise and originality. Lets just hope that, when it surfaces in September, it doesn't sink into oblivion, but rather sails off successfully into the sunset. **82**



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Note: This game cannot be bought from shops.

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GENIUS AT PLAY

PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the **ZONE** reviews first – we'll tell you which games you've got to buy and which games to avoid

THE PC ZONE GAMES SYSTEM

This is the machine we use to review new titles on. Our reviewers also use older machines to get an impression of gaming in the 'real' world, but this is what we currently consider the best value-for-money set up. As games become more demanding, the specs will change to reflect that

At the heart of the machine is a 600MHz AMD Athlon processor. These babies are seriously scorching, optimised for 3D applications, so first-person shooters fly like you wouldn't believe. Faster Athlons are now available, but at the present prices, this is probably the best value for money. The system bus runs at a godlike speed, so the whole thing is like a supercar with no brake pedal.

Supporting the processor is a MaxiGamer Xentor 32 from Guillemot, purveyors of all things graphicy. Based on the TNT2 chipset, these RAM-packed beasts are designed to cope with the polygons, textures and special effects that those game developers insist on chucking at the screen. Guillemot has a new GeForce 256-based card in the offing, which we're hoping to upgrade to soon.

Pionex has supplied the cases and 128Mb of PC100 memory for the motherboard. For gaming, especially with RAM prices as they are at the time of writing, 128Mb is the optimum amount. The cases have room for expansion without taking up excessive space. Nifty floppy slot too...

Hard drive services are provided by the stunning 7,200rpm, 20Gb Maxtor DiamondMax Plus (from the 5120 family

of drives). It's large and fast with room for full installs and quick to load games when you want to play them.

Sound services are supplied by VideoLogic. The SonicVortex 2 card is a PCI device featuring Aureal A3D 2.0, ideal for gamers. The latest drivers are stunning, using the card's own chip to reduce the processing overhead on the CPU when calculating 3D audio. Aureal's API now handles not only sounds themselves, but also their reflections: as you approach a doorway, you can hear sounds from the room reflected into the corridor. Immersive stuff.

VideoLogic also supplies speakers from the superb Sirocco range. We primarily use Crossfires for gaming – they may seem expensive, but you get twice the quality you pay for. Four satellite speakers and a humungous subwoofer give pinpoint accuracy for 3D audio and bass meaty enough for the rumbliest explosions. We also use other speakers from the range (the original Sirocco and new Sirocco Pro) for sound card testing.

Guillemot's DVD Theater setup provides not only the ability to load games quickly, but also to watch DVD movies (essential for reviewing games – not) with its bundled MPEG decoder card.

Peripherals are supplied by Microsoft, from USB mice (top-notch for first-person shooters) to the full force-feedback monty – joysticks and driving wheels – and the ubiquitous SideWinder gamepads.

Last but not least, are headphones from Philips (when the others in the office are suffering from Sirocco overkill) and fabulous 17in Brilliance monitors (107Bs). If you're used to cheap monitors typically bundled with new PCs, the crispness and stability of the image on these comes as quite a shock.

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at **ZONE** pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our reviewers are the most experienced and talented in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre, and won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we have our Feedback section on page 94. This is where you get the opportunity to put your point of view into **PC ZONE**.



CHECK THE SPECS!

The standard spec machine these days is a P233 with 32Mb of memory – but before a game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the tech specs on packaging can be a little optimistic, make sure you check out the We Say bit in our tech specs box. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call:

Acclaim 020 7344 5000 • Activision 01895 456700 • Anco 01322 292513 • Blue Byte (Germany) 49 0 208 450880 • Codemasters 01926 814132 • Cryo 01926 315552 • Eidos Interactive 020 8636 3000 • Electronic Arts 01932 450000 • Empire Interactive 020 8343 7337 • Europress 01625 855000 • Gremlin Interactive 0114 263 9900 • GT Interactive 020 8222 9700 • Hasbro Interactive 020 8569 1234 • Infogrames 0161 827 8000 • Interplay 020 7551 4222 • Microdroids (France) 00 33 146 01 54 01 • Microsoft 0345 002 000 • Mattel 01444 246333 • NovaLogic 020 7405 1777 • Rage Software 0151 237 2200 • Take 2 Interactive 01753 854 444 • THQ 01483 767656 • Ubi Soft 020 8944 9000 • Zabrac 01626 332233



MEET THE TEAM

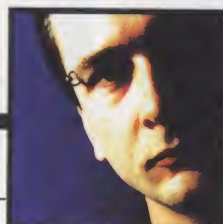
All **PC ZONE**'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a fan of the genre

Which part of you would you have cybernetically enhanced?



CHRIS ANDERSON
GENRE RPG, adventure, strategy
CURRENTLY PLAYING *EverQuest: Ruins Of Kunark*

My fists, so that I could punch Dave repeatedly when he beats me at *Quake*.



DAVE WOODS
GENRE FPS, RPG, arcade
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Counter-Strike*

My liver, because it's not coping very well at the moment.



RICHIE SHOEMAKER
GENRE RTS, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Counter-Strike*

My right ankle, so that I can walk normally with my ball and chain.



MARK HILL
GENRE Adventure, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Counter-Strike* and *Deus Ex*.

My brain, so that I could figure out how to enhance the rest of my body.

GOOD COP, BAD COP

★ REVIEWS EDITOR Dave Woods



We knew something suss was up when Mallo started making daily appearances in the ZONE office. Y'see he's been working on a secret Dennis project for the past few months and we've hardly seen him to say hello. Then he starts

popping up all over the place and politely asking whether *Deus Ex* has gone gold and whether he's still in line to review it. It's come to something when he even offers to take you down the pub and treat you to a few drinks to help make up your mind.

He reviewed *System Shock 2*, and since then he's been all over *Deus Ex* like a bad rash. That left me with a dilemma. Should I do the decent thing and let him get his hands on the first gold master that rolls into the ZONE offices? Or should I accept his beverages and tell him to bugger off? Turn the page and find out whether I'm a good cop or a bad cop.

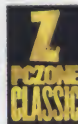
Elsewhere, we've got two huge sequels for you to admire (or not as the case may be). *Diablo II* and *Dark Reign 2* both stomped into our office and tried to intimidate us into making them Game Of The Year. With *Deus Ex* in the same issue, you'd better have something original up your sleeves chaps.

And talking of originality, how does a first-person shooter based around supergroup Kiss grab you? Or another *Star Trek* license in *Klingon Academy*, another RPG built around the *Baldur's Gate* engine in *Icwind Dale*, and a *Resident Evil* game that uses dinosaurs instead of zombies.

Thankfully, there is one big surprise. You might not have heard of *Terminus* yet, but if you're a space fan, read the review and applaud the originality that's on offer from this small development house.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

90-100% Here at ZONE we score every game out of 100. If a game receives the impressive score of 90 or above, it is awarded the PC ZONE Classic award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not really a fan of the genre.



80-89% Games that score 80-89 get the PC ZONE Award For Excellence. These are excellent examples of their type of game and if you're a fan of the genre you should definitely consider buying the title.



70-79% Any games scoring between 70-79 have just missed an Award For Excellence, but don't ignore them. The score is well above average and that means you're getting a great title that's worth the investment if you're a fan of the genre.

50-69% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-49% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or if you happen to see them at a reduced price.

0-19% Games that score less than 20 should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged, then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.



REVIEWS CONTENTS

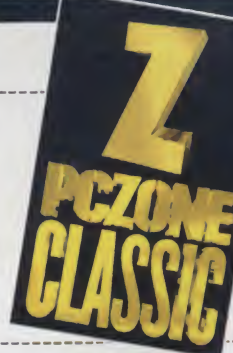
- 54 DEUS EX**
The best of *Half-Life* and *System Shock 2*.
- 60 KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS**
Ageing rockers in FPS shocker.
- 64 DARK REIGN 2**
3D update of RTS classic. Can it reign again?
- 66 DIABLO II**
Hack 'n' slash. And hack 'n' slash again.
- 70 KLINGON ACADEMY**
Space combat and *Star Trek*. The perfect combination.
- 72 ICEWIND DALE**
It's *Baldur's Gate*, with extra dungeons.
- 75 MILLENNIUM GAMES**
Keyboard bashing track and field action.
- 76 TERMINUS**
Brave new space simulation epic.
- 78 DINO CRISIS**
It's *Resident Evil*, with dinosaurs.
- 80 REVIEW SHORTS**
International Cricket Captain 2000
The Dukes of Hazzard: Racing For Home
Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing
All Star Tennis 2000
Combat Mission
Sammy Sosa's High Heat Baseball 2001

IT'S A TOUGH CALL...

Under the ZONE scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. There are now very few titles that can justifiably be described

as PC ZONE Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all ZONE Classics are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the PC

ZONE Award For Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them. When we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!



MARTIN KORDA
GENRE Strategy, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Counter-Strike.

My eyesight, because there's nothing more painful than a dry, screwed up contact lens.



PAUL MALLINSON
GENRE Action, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Deus Ex*

My finger, because living in London I like nothing more than picking all the smog and dirt out of my nose.



PAUL PRESLEY
GENRE FPS, action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Rogue Spear*

Giggle... snigger... guffaw... wahaha.



KEITH PULLIN
GENRE Adventure/ RTS
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Shogun: Total War*

I'd actually get a complete clone made. My other half's making me do DIY at the moment and it's duuuull.



JAMES LYON
GENRE Action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Baldur's Gate

Actually, I once put a cyber implant in my stomach so that I could eat soil, but it was full of bugs. Ha ha... Stab.



STEVE HILL
GENRE Football, racing
CURRENTLY PLAYING
Championship Manager 99/00

My wrist, because I shattered it in 14 places while playing football, not for any other reason. Honest.

DEUS EX

Phew, where to start? Having spent pretty much every spare hour playing *Deus Ex* this week, taking notes as we went, it came to our attention that we'd compiled and collected so many thoughts and feelings about the game that we'd run out of paper in our notepads... We played and played, and wrote and wrote. And wrote and wrote and wrote! What we're trying to say at such an early point in this review is: *Deus Ex* just has loads in it.

So we'd better get on with it, otherwise we're rapidly gonna run out of space here...

BEST BITS FROM OTHER GAMES

Deus Ex, as those who've been following its progress with interest will already know, is a deep, complex and involving game, mixing hardcore role-playing elements with full-on first-person action and talkie, adventure-y bits. In fact, it's an amazing amalgam of various gaming genres brought together in a superbly wholesome way. If, after perusing the screenshots here, you can't already picture how *Deus Ex* plays, imagine something of a cross between *System Shock 2*, *Thief*, *GoldenEye* (classic N64 shoot 'em up based on the Bond movie of the same name – Ed), *Half-Life*, *Soldier Of Fortune*, *Kingpin* and *SiN*. And, erm, *Unreal Tournament*. So that's a lot of games all rolled into one, then. A lot of great games, for that matter...

But what the creators of *Deus Ex* have done so well is collect and refine all of the best bits from all the above mentioned games and make them work

extremely well together in their game. And we do mean *extremely* well together.

BETTER THAN THE MOVIES?

From our point of view, the most important feature in a game of this sort is the story. The game might have the best graphics, best engine and best interface ever, but you aren't going to give much of a toss if the story doesn't appeal to you. Nothing you don't already know, but you're still probably wondering what we're getting at here...

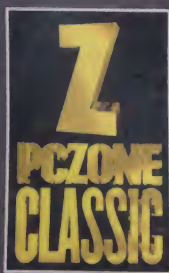
The tale of a cyber-enhanced secret agent on the trail of death dealing terrorists, *Deus Ex* plays out one of the most fulfilling and interesting storylines ever created in a computer game. Although there are obvious parallels to be drawn from films such as *RoboCop* and *The Matrix*, *Deus Ex* actually manages to cobble together a rollercoaster of a plotline that equals those in both of the aforementioned movies. A bold claim to make, but one based on rigorous playtesting and re-playtesting, and one that we think is right, too.

CONSTANTLY MONITORED

Deus Ex opens with a tantalisingly vague intro sequence. You're shown characters, unknown to

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He's been waiting for this moment for some time now... *Paul Mallinson* finally gets his hands on the finished *Deus Ex*





Stray bullets can ignite explosives, which is sometimes useful, but always deadly.

you until later in the game, engaging in techno-babble conversations about a killer plague called the 'Grey Death', and about some cure called Ambrosia being in short supply. No matter how hard you concentrate when you first watch this exquisitely scripted 'in-engine' cut-scene, most of it is guaranteed to go over your head. But that doesn't matter, because what the designers are actually doing is planting seeds in your subconscious, ready to be germinated as the chapters of the story unfold.

Not before long, it transpires that, for the duration of *Deus Ex*, you are to assume the role of Mr

the outset. But, considering he cost a cool \$50 billion to build in the first place, you'd expect that.

PROFESSIONAL ADVANTAGE

Once all the cut sequence chatter dies down (and the black 'sim-u-lo' widescreen bars disappear from the screen) you find yourself on your own in one tiny corner of a huge 3D representation of New York City's famous Liberty Island. Down the docks, to be precise. It is here that *Deus Ex*'s superb cast of characters begin to introduce themselves. First up, JC Denton's brother – your brother – who provides you with weapons, intelligence, and advice to be cautious, is a gruff bloke with a

transmitting instructions directly into your modified brain, also makes his entrance at this early point in *Deus Ex*. Alex Jacobson, a young kid, barely out of high school, is his name, and as the story meanders along, his comments and suggestions adapt to your style of play. In the real world we'd probably call that cheating, but, in *Deus Ex*, a voice in your head barking warnings and tips at you is clearly nothing more than 'professional advantage'. And when head shots count, as they do in this game, you need all the help you can get.

COMPLETELY EMBROIDERED

As the concept of *Deus Ex* slowly permeates your brain, the cast of characters slowly reveal themselves, and the plot finally begins to make some sense, you'll find yourself completely embroiled by JC Denton's exploits. Until you reach the point where you actually begin to think you're him. No – really. *Deus Ex* is that involving. During a particularly tense scene you may find yourself gritting your teeth as a robot death machine howls "scanning area!" at the top of its voice only feet away from the shadows where you're hiding. Or you'll feel the dull thud of a sniper's bullet as you

nonchalantly stroll into an open area. In fact, the whole feel of the game is pretty much spot on. Creeping around (little finger outstretched, pushing down the 'crouch' key...), and evading patrolling guards is, in itself, immensely satisfying.

INGRAINED IN YOUR BRAIN

At first it's tough. Even on the easiest of the four skills settings. When you first start the game, dashing around like a madman, trying to play *Quake*, it doesn't take long to realise that the sound of your footsteps alone can give you away to the enemy. And that includes at a distance, or from behind a door. Untimely death abounds if you stomp your way around the place, so the instinctive reaction to change from walking or running to a silent crawl becomes ingrained in your brain from an early stage. It's a great feeling – sneaking past guards who are seen picking their noses or scratching their arses, unaware there's a highly-trained killer kneeling beside them...

Getting into the process of hiding, scuttling from cover to cover and silently dispatching sentries and guards is a slow process initially, but there are certain things to consider while you're at it. Firstly, sentries and guards follow set patrols. They may pause for a while, sometimes even conversing with other sentries (and moaning about "not seeing any action"), and will also investigate if they hear something, but generally it is possible to work out their routes. Secondly, you should always watch where you're going. Startling a flock of pigeons by inadvertently walking close to them can alert nearby guards. As can wandering into a limpet mine. Or staggering in front of a surveillance camera. Searching around – preparing for an attack before going in – is essential. Thirdly, that a silent takedown (with an electro prod, or razor-sharp knife) is often better than shooting everyone in sight. For two reasons: it saves you ammo (in short supply on harder difficulty settings), and also alerts less people to your presence in the area. If you stick to these hard

Imagine a cross between *System Shock 2*, *Thief*, *Goldeneye*, *Half-Life*, *Soldier Of Fortune*, *Kingpin* and *SiN*. And, erm, *Unreal Tournament*. A lot of great games in one

JC Denton – a state-of-the-art, straight-from-the-smelting-plant government agent with the ability to enhance himself with cyber implants, skill enhancements and a huge array of fancy weapons and gadgets. The first level being his first proper 'live' mission ever, JC finds himself being monitored by the government top brass from

neat goatee beard and the same attire as you. You also – JC Denton – sound a bit like Bruce Willis on Quaaludes, but the chatter between the characters is actually triple-A stuff, remaining gritty, sharp and adaptive the whole way through the game.

A voice in your head, or rather, a government operative



JC Denton: Blackmail of the U.S. government could not possibly escape the notice of the United Nations.

Brothers JC (left) and Paul Denton swap notes early on in the game.



The fantastic GEP Gun. In Hong Kong. Yesterday.

and fast rules, combat in *Deus Ex* quickly becomes very compelling.

UNREAL ENGINE

Although *Deus Ex* utilises the famed *Unreal* engine to bring this exquisite combat system to us, the weapons in *Deus Ex* aren't very *Unreal*-like in look or feel.

Of course there's a sniper rifle, and this one can be modified and upgraded to startling effect. Recoil, clip capacity, range, base damage, reload time and ammo type are all changeable. Plus a silencer can be added for even better effect. On top of that, your

skill as a marksman can also be honed to perfection by spending skill points on the discipline, thus steadying your snooker arm as you aim at a faraway target. Which helps immensely. And you

with, and that's without even mentioning the *swords*... Yes, despite coming from the same development house (Ion Storm), *Deus Ex* manages to beat *Daikatana* at it's own game by bringing ludicrous swords into the equation. The end result is totally hilarious, but still in keeping with the spirit of the game.

AGGRESSIVE PARTNER

For the first few missions things go the way you'd expect them to. You meet your partner, an aggressive female cyber-babe called Anna Navarre; your boss – a moustachioed desk jockey with a

Not sure how many seconds you have to 'comply' with these things...

can apply that to pretty much every other weapon in the game, apart from the crazy specialist ones such as the Plasma Gun and the GEP (Guided Explosive Projectile) Gun.

There are two types of shotgun (one rapid-firing), numerous pistols and a whole host of grenades to play around

pendant for red ties; an alcoholic helicopter pilot who ferries you about the place; plus many, many other freaks, hookers, pimps, killers and junkies, all in the course of your duties. Conversations are both natural and logical, with every eventuality seemingly covered. Some conversations give you multiple choice replies, allowing not only the interrogation of suspect characters, but also the chance to model your own personality in light of your gaming style. Be aggressive and trigger happy and the other characters in the game react to that (some even try to reduce your ammunition supply if you're popping too many people!); be diplomatic and cautious and you'll easily gain the respect of the game's key characters.

At one key point in the game you are ordered to kill a suspect terrorist (see box entitled To Kill Or Not To Kill). Whether you kill him or not is down to your own better judgement, but you don't get a great deal of time to make the decision and the game suddenly turns on its head once it's been made. At this point in

One wrong move and you'll set the automatic sentry guns off. Never a good idea in a gas-filled corridor.

There goes Alex Jacobson – that voice in your head – again.

Be liberal with your Multitool device. It can save you the hassle of an enemy counter attack.

WALKTHROUGH

TO KILL OR NOT TO KILL? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Deus Ex is not strictly linear

At one point in the storyline you are ordered to assassinate a terrorist leader. If you carry out your orders you're congratulated for your loyalty. If you don't – well – all hell breaks loose back at headquarters...

2 The plot thickens...



JC Denton: He makes his own decisions.
Juan Ibarra: You know he won't let us stay (UNATCO) without a reason.
Juan Ibarra: The question you've got to ask... is the question you haven't... is the question who are we? Who made me and for what purpose?

1 You find him unarmed.



Juan Ibarra: Only now, Agent. UNATCO has a policy against killing unarmed prisoners. We have to let it learn from each other.
JC Denton: We're assuming control of the artifact. The vaccine will be returned to the international authorities.
Juan Ibarra: Don't you want to take your own little game over to all, huh?

3 Your orders are to kill him.



Anna Navarre: Good work. Now finish the job.
JC Denton: He surrendered. He's an unarmed prisoner – UNATCO policy protects him.
Anna Navarre: Terminate the prisoner, Agent. If you don't stop all hell will be unleashed. There is a helicopter waiting.

4 What do you do?



“*Deus Ex* manages to beat *Daikatana* at its own game by bringing ludicrous swords in to the equation. The end result is totally hilarious, but still in keeping with the spirit of the game”



How you gonna get past those guards, eh?



Bingo! Lock bypassed. Augmentation Upgrade Canister plundered.



Oops - poison gas. That's torn it.

MIND THE CAT, MAN

Watch out for the irrational urge to squash pets

You can tread on rats and squash them for a laugh (hur hur!), but accidentally squashing a cat for the first time is an experience to behold. At first: abject horror at your unbelievable clumsiness, then a sudden urge to do it some more. You can also 'accidentally' squash dogs too, only it takes a run-up and a jump to do it properly. Oh, the horror.



Animal cruelty is a recurring theme.

END



A If you kill him...

Dead Body (Jean Lebedev)



B ...you impress your partner, and your bosses.

UNITED Clerk: Great, good. Here's your job bonus on credit, 1000 for a flawless performance. You might be interested to know that your specialty has impressed some very powerful people.



A If you chicken out, Anna gives you some stick...



A Or you can kill your partner,...



B ...and your boss is less than happy.

UNITED Clerk: Just shut up and listen for a second. Christ, JC, this kind of behavior, not to mention your brother's detection, is making certain



B ...head back to base, and try covering it up.

JC Briefing: I have some bad news about Agent Novak.

THAT MENU SYSTEM, IN FULL

An excellent interface always helps a game run smoothly, especially when there's so much ground to cover

Although it may look like there are too many menus to deal with in *Deus Ex*, they're all reachable from one main screen and the action freezes when you access it. So you're given time to ponder major decisions and rarely feel overwhelmed into making costly mistakes due to ham-fistedness.



You can only carry a certain amount of gear, and, as Morrissey would say, some guns are bigger than others.



When someone shoots you it destroys part of your body. Head shots count – even when they're against you.



Plug-in add-ons that add a range of enhancements to your body. Each has four levels of effectiveness.



The core RPG element of the game. Skills can be increased by completing objectives and doing good.



Forgot what you were supposed to do? Every significant detail about your current mission is stored here.



There are reams and reams of conversations in *Deus Ex*. From this screen you can access every one of them.



Every now and then you'll be supplied with useful visual information (ie a map) which is archived here.



Want to know what the *Deus Ex* engine is thinking while you're playing? No, neither do we. But...

the review we do find it a little difficult to continue without giving too much of the story away, as what transpires is not only surprisingly original, but also incredibly well structured.

REALISM

Despite the abundance of futuristic gadgetry (not to mention acronym-heavy in-character banter), *Deus Ex* always manages to feel contemporary and modern rather than outlandish and crass, as many other sci-fi games tend to appear. There are no floating vehicles; no big shoulder pads; no camp robots; and no daft monsters (well, not *that* daft anyway). And certainly no silly spells, which – again – is refreshing for an RPG.

We've been banging on about realism in games for ages now, and finally we're actually getting some. On the hardest difficulty setting, 'Realistic', we really are talking *realistic*. Two or three bullet hits will kill you. The enemy's senses are also much more acute, and their aim truer too, and – to be honest – you'd have a hard time getting past the first few levels if you started out on this setting.

INPERSPECTIVE

If you have played *System Shock 2*, *Half-Life* and *Thief II* then you'll know what to expect. If not, why not?

Half-Life

Deus Ex

Thief II: The Metal Age

System Shock 2

...

IT'S NOT RICE PUDDING

It's Ambrosia, but not as we know it...



Ambrosia, the food of the gods.

Ambrosia rice pudding may have been loved by generations, but the Ambrosia in *Deus Ex* is slightly more green and probably less tasty than the famous tinned dessert of the same name. In fact, the Ambrosia in this game is actually a rare-as-rocking-horse-shit cure for a deadly disease called The Grey Death, and is an extremely valuable commodity.



A magazine found within the game. Spot the deliberate mistake...

AMAZING ENVIRONMENT

One of the main factors in *Deus Ex*'s success is the

environment modelling. Each level is not only huge but also crammed with a glorious amount of detail. Almost every free-form object in the game can be picked up and moved around – boxes, chairs, cups, dustbins... even dead bodies. And if what you're trying to lift is too heavy, a 'strength' Augmentation upgrade will remedy the problem. Large metal boxes, all of which are initially immobile due to their weight, come into play when this happens, opening up previously out-of-reach areas and giving access to hidden power-ups and secret little nooks and crannies.

Hiding the bodies of your victims has a significant effect on the gameplay too. If you pop a guard and leave the body where it falls you run the risk of another guard stumbling across it and setting off the alarms. So it makes sense to sneak in and clean up afterwards – covering your tracks as it were. It must be said that we did encounter a slight problem with this aspect of the game, in that if your inventory is full and the body you're trying to lift is carrying something, the game won't let you do it. If it's crucial to move the body you have to first make room in your inventory, then loot whatever the cadaver is carrying, before being allowed to lift it. This 'bug' doesn't have a significant affect on the game itself, but is slightly annoying and will hopefully be remedied in the first patch available.

REAL-WORLD PHYSICS

The amazing 'real-world' physics engine (courtesy of *Epic* and *Unreal* don't forget) and the



Your appointment to FEMA should be finalized within the week. I've already discussed the matter with the Senator.
If you don't like 'cyber talk' or 'techno babble' you might not like *Deus Ex*.



Augmentation canisters boost the strength of your biological enhancement.

abundance of moveable objects combine to provide the most tactile 3D gaming environment ever seen in a computer game (at this point in time), and the possibilities for sick, twisted hijinx are endless. For example, ever wanted to throw a dustbin out of a window? Or launch a TV off a hotel balcony on the tenth floor? Or chuck a dead body off the top of a skyscraper? This game allows you to do such things (and, in the case of our latter example, we saw tiny figures run towards the mashed body to investigate! Amazing...) And not only that, but there are also numerous pool tables, basketball courts and dart boards to be found in *Deus Ex* too, all of which – *gasp!* – work, providing a slight distraction from the blood, sweat and tears of the main plotline if needed.

DARK AND SERIOUS

In terms of atmosphere, *Deus Ex* remains dark and serious throughout. There are humorous interludes and quiet bits, but generally the game exudes a gritty, tough exterior. This is reflected in the music (predominantly a collection of trip hop and ambient techno tunes), the weather atmospherics, and the brilliant sound effects – all of which combine to make, as we keep saying, an unbelievably realistic stage on which to act out your killer cop fantasies.

So, finally, Ion Storm delivers a game worth shouting about. The developers may still be smarting at the reception *Daikatana* received from the general public, but they should now put the whole sorry episode behind them and focus on this game. A game that, in our opinion, has just

leapfrogged *System Shock 2* as the current benchmark in the role-playing genre. "Why is that?" you might ask. To which we'd reply: non-player characters. In *System Shock 2* (the previous benchmark RPG) you were out on your own – in this there's a proper cast of characters and their interaction is a joy to behold. *System Shock 2* is slightly scarier, but *Deus Ex* is bigger, harder and more satisfying to beat. It's a cracking game – a real blood, guts and bullets comic book story with depth, flexibility and staying power. *Deus Ex* presents not only physical and mental problems for you to solve, but also numerous moral dilemmas to overcome. It is a giant of a game and another step forward for the role-playing genre. Don't hesitate to buy it when you see the box in your local computer shop – you will not be disappointed. [X]

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P300
Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
3D accelerator card, 500Mb HD space
SUPPORTS Have to turn detail right down on min spec PC. Need Pentium III and at least 128Mb RAM for full detail.

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Superbly atmospheric • Surprisingly interesting storyline • Amazing attention to detail • Very tense and extremely challenging • Re-playable

DOWNERS Can't lift bodies if inventory is full • Possibly overwhelming for some

94 The new action role-playing benchmark

Crikey – the characters in *Deus Ex* even blink! Now that is attention to detail.

Some of your victims explode when they die. So you have to be careful when you fight them.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

There are shedloads of non-player characters in this game. Here's a selection of the key players...



Alex Jacobson
Your 'in-head' sidekick



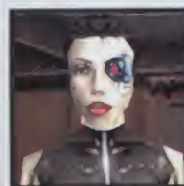
Janice Reed
UNATCO Secretary (nice legs!)



Joseph Manderley
Boss of UNATCO, New York



Sam Carter
In charge of UNATCO ordnance



Anna Navarre
Your tetchy female cop partner



Jock
Helicopter pilot friend of yours



Men In Black
Sinister government agents



Smuggler
Underground arms dealer



Gunther Hermann
Meathead metal combat cop



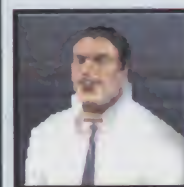
Joe Greene
Journalist – nosin' around



NSF Terrorist
Initially your main foe



UNATCO Troop
There to help you win your battles



Jamie Reyes
The doctor who built you



JoJo Fine
Local Manhattan thug



Paul Denton
JC's more experienced brother



Walter Simons
Another shadowy government agent



The melee weapons save ammo and are good for cutting through swarms of the Headless.



Bring out the geek.

KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS: THE NIGHTMARE CHILD

★ £34.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

Take an ageing band of rockers, a tin of grease paint, a few disgruntled ex-Ion Storm employees and a couple of workstations, and bake in the oven for an hour. **Dave Woods** reviews another game where he has to shoot things in the head

idols. Flip the coin over and you've got a title that's likely to be ignored by die-hard gamers who know that these sort of licenses are often a way of hiding utter trash masquerading as entertainment.

But not in this case. Despite the fact

that *Psycho Circus* is almost completely devoid of innovation, from the distinctly unremarkable AI to the *Doom* homage in the second realm and secret hiding places, it's an entertaining game that's well worth £35 of anyone's hard-earned cash.

How so? It's simple really. Behind our cries for realism and human-like AI, one important point can get overlooked: games are supposed to be fun. *Psycho Circus* is a blast for three very important reasons: level design, monsters and weapons. Get these secret

with a crystal ball. Before you know it, you're in charge of saving the world, through four distinct realms of the *Psycho Circus*. You have to play all four characters through all four realms, and, although there's a suggested order, you can tackle any of the realms at any time.

By choosing to build the game around the marvellously flexible LithTech engine, Third Law has been able to flex its muscle by designing levels that move from claustrophobic corridors to massive landscapes, canyons and ravines. It's something that id has

Let's have a quick game of word association. Ready? Ex-*Daikatana* developers leave Ion Storm and start creating their own first-person shooter based around the exploits of sad supergroups, Kiss. What's the first thing that comes into your mind? Now that's not very complimentary is it? And if we printed words like that then we'd be taken off the shelves at WH Smiths.

Basing a game around rock dinosaurs like Kiss is a risky business. On the one hand it's going to sell to die-hard fans who must, simply must, own everything connected to their

Mirror, mirror, on the wall.
Which is the best shooter of
them all? Still *Half-Life* you fool.

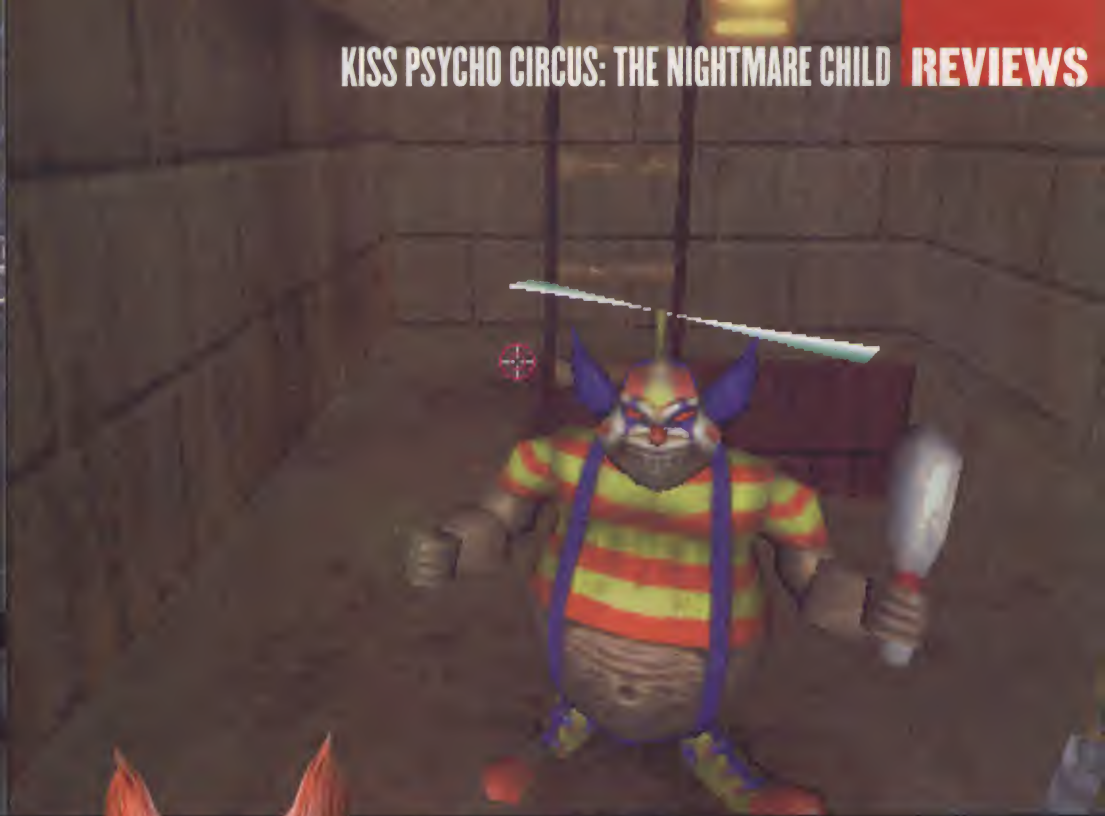


“Despite the fact that *Psycho Circus* is almost devoid of innovation, it's well worth £35 of anyone's cash”

ingredients in place and you're in a no-lose situation. (Take note John Romero).

Before we look at these in closer detail, let's just fill you in on the basic storyline. Four members of a band turn up at a seemingly deserted circus and are accosted by a man-woman

never been able to code into its admittedly superior *Quake* engines and it suits the style of this game perfectly. The LithTech engine also delivers the looks that we've become accustomed to (*Daikatana* notwithstanding), although it does sell us short on water and, with next-generation blasters like *Voyager* imminent,



When was the last time you saw your feet?

it's going to look dated before the boxed copies hit the shelves. But that's something we're willing to forgive.

Then there are the monsters. If you've read our preview then you'll know that the one feature we were looking forward to was the Horde technology, which promised swarms of creatures on-screen at once. Now we've played through the full game, we're pleased to report that it's in place and it works a treat. Even on a mid-end system we didn't suffer any slowdown, despite tackling dozens of creatures, from scuttling the Headless to Flaming UniPsychos and Fat Ladies.

Cleverly, all of this frantic action disguises the fact that the AI in the game isn't really up to much. It's not quite as bad as the disastrous *Daikatana*, but you won't find anything displaying the tactical awareness of the *Half-Life* troops. However,

with a level full of creatures that can follow you wherever you go, and taking into account the mix of flying and ground-based creatures with melee or long-range attacks, it doesn't matter. The strategy that you have to follow is dictated by numbers and

you'll actually find yourself halfway through the game before realising that you haven't even had time to stop and think about the AI. Another new strategy is introduced via the spawning points. These contraptions spew out smaller creatures (up to the rotten Gasbags) by the bucket

load, so you can't just dig in and keep shooting, otherwise you're going to run out of ammunition just before you get overwhelmed. Instead you have to destroy the nests before trying to clear the screen of your adversaries. As mentioned, this does lead to a

small problem. The way the levels have been designed, it's

sometimes extremely hard to reach the spawn points. In the second realm, spawn points have been placed on upper levels, which doesn't stop the creatures

it hard to progress through the game without constant recourse to the quick save key. It's the biggest irritation in the game and it could be solved by a dynamic ammunition system which takes into account how low you are and doles out the bullets accordingly.

It's a damn shame as well because the range of weapons is excellent, and having to stare down at five or six empty barrels can be a heart-breaking experience. The weapons are surprisingly effective, from the melee weapons like the sword, gloves or battleaxe, through to the magma and zero cannons, and up to the four ultimate weapons that are granted to each of the four characters.

The balance is excellent. All of the weapons have their place, and all are effective, even the assorted melee stuff, which doesn't normally work. There's no alternate fire mode, which is a bit of a shame, and there's no sniper rifle (although you can

"My mother-in-law is so fat that..."



The second realm leads you to the Doom Forge, a place that's full of these things. Look familiar?



Collect the pieces of armour scattered around the levels and your powers increase.



This is similar to the flak cannon in *UT*, and more effective at blowing limbs off.

← zoom in at any time by using the Hawkeye option), but there are some neat little touches, such as the way you have to use the super-whip to haul yourself across huge ravines or up into places you wouldn't be able to access normally.

Another nice touch (and completely in keeping with the arcade style of game) is that each

of the creatures you attack has a life bar so you can see how much damage each weapon is doing and how much longer you need to keep battering away until the thing gives up the ghost.

And there's even a few dollops of humour. The different creatures that are sent out to destroy you have an uneasy alliance with each other. One stray shot and

this is gone, leaving them to slug it out with each other while you tiptoe back to the safety of the spectators gallery. With the amount of creatures on screen at any one time, this is pretty well balanced; it doesn't happen too often but when it does, it's usually right when you need it.

There are also a few jukeboxes scattered around. Use

one and a Kiss track drops onto the platter and starts blaring out of your speakers. You might like this (who are we to say?), but it put the willies up us, and instinctively we backed off and fired a shot, which destroyed the jukebox and stopped Gene in mid flow.

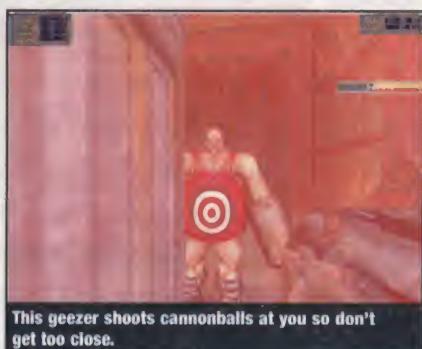
And, on the subject of humour, the game itself is a cheeky two-fingered salute to Third Law's ex employer Ion Storm. Think about it. *Daikatana* is a FPS that's set

also set across four different realms, with different creatures, weapons (including a sword that actually does a bit of damage) and the ability to collect armour along the way that upgrades your powers. It's also a quality game.

Psycho Circus doesn't rewrite any of the FPS laws, but it succeeds in refining and tweaking and proving that there's still life in the genre. It's not going to win any awards and there's a general feeling of déjà vu,



The Arakniclown isn't in the game to make you laugh.



This geezer shoots cannonballs at you so don't get too close.



If there's no obvious way out you can use your whip to access different parts of the level.

“Each of the creatures you attack has a life bar so you can see how long you need to batter away before it gives up the ghost”

across four distinct realms, populated by a wide variety of creatures. In each one you get access to a multitude of different weapons, including the fabled *Daikatana* sword, and you can upgrade characteristics such as jumping along the way. Trouble is, the game stinks. *Psycho Circus* is

particularly in the second realm, but as a means of passing time there's a lot worse on the shelves of your local shop. *Third Law* has had to withstand a lot of criticism about its abilities but *Psycho Circus* has done just enough to prove all the critics wrong. Who's having the last laugh now? [C]

IN PERSPECTIVE

You've heard all this before. If you haven't bought and played *Half-Life* you're a fool. If you have bought and played *Daikatana* you're a fool. Want multiplayer? Get *Quake III* or *Unreal Tournament*. For a bit of honest, good old-fashioned shooting nonsense, *Psycho Circus* is the business.

Half-Life	████████████████████
Quake III	████████████████████
Unreal Tournament	████████████████████
Daikatana	████████████████████
Kiss Psycho Circus	████████████████████

PCZ VERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** Single player shooter that's worth buying • Loads of creatures on-screen at once • Frenetic arcade action • Balanced weapons
 ⬇ **DOWNERS** Nothing new or innovative • Lithtech engine doesn't handle water well

78 *Daikatana* can Kiss off. This is a blast

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266
 Memory 64Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** Funny enough, that's just about spot on

BOSS CHOPS

Billy Smart's circus was never like this. At the end of each of the four acts, a nasty end-of-level boss is ready to entertain you with his own unique blend of certain death. You'd better be tooled up

FORTUNADA

The last time we encountered skittles we'd had a few pints of cloudy cider. The end results were pretty similar.



TIBERIUS

Ugly, faster than a very fast thing and twice as big, Tiberius is the person we spent the night with after the aforementioned cider.



STARGRAVE

Is it cold up there? What's the view like? Have you ever been to Mount Stargrave? Oh we give up.



BLACKWELL

Look at you, you're tiny. What are you going to do, bore me to death with your ring announcement? What's that? Oh, I'm dead.



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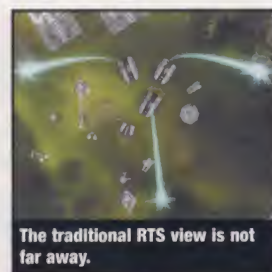
data and quickly recover from hard disk or system failures. Easy CD Creator 4 Deluxe also enables you to edit, enhance and share your photos and video. Do more with your music, data, photos, and video with Easy CD Creator 4 Deluxe. The box even includes a CD labeller, sample labels and a cable to connect your stereo to your computer.

<http://www.adaptec-europe.com>

Available from Action Computer Supplies, Dabs Direct, Insight, Micro Warehouse, PC World, Simply Computers, Software Warehouse or from your local computer software reseller.



Some of the landscapes are stunning. Shame nothing else in the game is that impressive.



The traditional RTS view is not far away.



Battles take place on land, sea and in the air.

DARK REIGN 2

★ £39.99 • Activision • Out now

It's reigning again. Keith Pullin pours scorn on the latest RTS contender

At this moment in time, the PC finds itself swimming in an ocean of 3D real-time strategy games. If the majority of these were as good as, say, *Homeworld* or *Ground Control* everything would be fine. Sadly, this isn't the case and we're drowning in cheap imitations and production line clones. In *Dark Reign 2* we have the perfect example.

Despite the hype and the decent in-game presentation, *DR2* epitomises the word

'average'. If there is any originality here at all, it's buried so deep you'll need a drilling rig to find it. Take the storyline: two sides (the capitalist JDA and the revolutionary Sprawlers) battle it out to discover alien technology that will ultimately allow them to rule the Earth. How many times have we heard that before?

“DR2 epitomises the word ‘average’. If there's any originality here at all, it's buried so deep you'll need a drilling rig to find it”

Unfortunately for us, the storyline is one of the best parts of the game. Other areas actually take a giant leap backwards for computer gaming.

CLOWNING AROUND

The most disastrous aspect of the game has to be the AI and interface. Apart from moving extremely slowly, each and every unit (whether it's on wheels, on foot, on water, or airborne) has

great difficulty simply getting from A to B. Bemused infantry units can't even manoeuvre around lamp posts without jostling and banging into each other.

Obviously, actually fighting a war with these clowns is no easy task. If a group is already engaged in a skirmish, nearby units won't even try to help their

comrades. Instead they erratically mince about, waiting and watching until the entire squad is dead. Finally they'll stand motionless and allow themselves to be blown apart by long-range missiles. Even selecting one of the five stances available makes no difference. If you've experienced the interface in *Ground Control* you know what near perfection is. The interface in *Dark Reign 2* is not even close.

It's probably worth mentioning the resource management at this point, not because it's particularly interesting or different, but because it's indicative of the lacklustre effort that's been put into *DR2*'s creation. In order to build your base and army you have to collect a rock known as Taelon. The unit you use to collect this substance is called, wait for it – a Collector. Must have taken a while to think that one up. Even the icons depicting the different types of construction are difficult to work out.

At least with *Earth 2150* a bit of originality was added to the micromanagement by including supply lines and units that ran out of ammo. *DR2* is blessed with no such detail – units can shoot (if you're lucky) until the cows come home.

Don't expect too much in the way of sound either. What little there is lacks atmosphere, and the acknowledgement voice

IN PERSPECTIVE

When you compare this to recent superlative RTS releases like *Shogun* and *Ground Control*, *Dark Reign 2* plummets into mediocrity. How many more bog-standard games of this kind can we cope with? The answer: not many more, saturation point has already been reached...

Dark Reign 2

Shogun: Total War

Ground Control

Homeworld

Earth 2150

samples for the units, especially the Sprawlers, verge on downright irritating.

BORN FREE?

If you're looking for a high quality, free-roaming camera – forget it. To enter 'freelook' mode you have to press and hold down the 'f' key

On the plus side, there's plenty of blood and gore.





The JDA tries an all-out attack.



Infantry... all heading in the same direction for once.



Some units come equipped with special vision for night battles.



Any second now a giant marshmallow man will appear.



Sprawlers launch an assault on a remote mountain base.

while you scan the landscape. The same goes for the zoom button. Unfortunately, once you've zoomed in you can't move the camera anywhere else. To regain control you have to release the zoom button and return to the main view. To call this pointless is the biggest understatement since King Harold said: "I think I've got something in my eye."

It's hard to say why Pandemic has incorporated such a truly cack-handed view method. After all, every other recent RTS that's of any worth has managed to offer one that's simple to use and actually beneficial for general gameplay. Maybe it's something to do with all the particle effects and trilinear filtering, although *Ground Control* boasted similar effects and managed fine.

While we're on the subject of effects, you've probably noticed from the screenshots that *DR2* is actually a great looking game. Detail on the buildings and

units could be better, but the landscapes are extremely detailed and cover such diverse landmarks as waterfalls, rivers, trees, reflective water and majestic cityscapes. There's even a day and night cycle.

THE REIGN IS OVER

When a game's strongest point is its two campaigns, you know you're in serious trouble. Sure, it's nice to know you can play through 20 missions from two different perspectives, but it's hardly the pinnacle of entertainment and let's face it — it's something that only the worst RTS's seem to do...

Pandemic appears to have gone out of its way to make *DR2* as crappy as possible, and for the life of us we don't know why. *Dark Reign* had its critics but at least it was novel for the time. This sequel offers nothing new and even feels like a 2D RTS along the lines of *Dune 2000*, *Tiberian Sun* or dear old *Dark Reign* itself.

There's sure to be *Dark Reign* fans out there who'll pretend this review doesn't exist. Fine — go and buy it, but trust us, you'll regret it for the rest of your lives... Well, the next fortnight maybe. **[X]**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233
Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
WE SAY PIII 333 with 128Mb RAM and
a 3dfx card

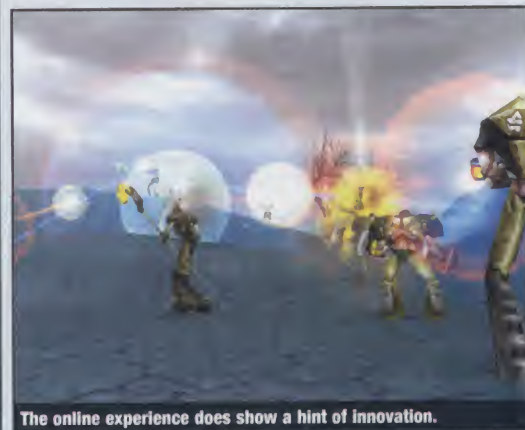
PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS** Two campaigns • Good online options • Nice graphics
- DOWNERS** Terrible AI • Dull resource management • Bad slowdown • Poor camera • Confusing interface

62 A dark, dark day for *Dark Reign* fans

MULTIPLAYER RELIEF

If there is a saving grace it's the co-op online game. Here you can play co-operatively with another player and actually share the same units. This means that while one person concentrates on resource management, the other can plan exploration and attacks. It's a shame the interface and AI is so bad, it might have been quite good fun otherwise. Oh well.



The online experience does show a hint of innovation.



This is about as good as the graphics get.



No lack of enemies in *Diablo II*.



The B0 spell keeps every creature at bay.



These big jungle monsters are a doddle to kill.

DIABLO II

★ £34.99 • Havas Interactive • Out now

There is a special relationship between hacks and hack 'n' slash games. We're not sure what it is, but here is hack Mark Hill reviewing *Diablo II*...

The original *Diablo* was a phenomenal success. The graphics were simple, the gameplay was even simpler and the story was virtually non-existent. But somehow, thanks to the delicately balanced difficulty level in the single-player game and the immense popularity of the multiplayer aspect with the hardcore online community, *Diablo* was a winner. With such a big audience waiting to eat it up, there's no denying that this sequel will be another success. But it won't necessarily be winning any fans among the critics of the original.

DEVILISHLY AVERAGE LOOKS

If you're not expecting much more than *Diablo 1.5* you won't be disappointed. Blizzard knows exactly what its fans want: the same, only much more of it. This would be fine if the sequel had

time warp and the animation is jerky and clumsy. In fact, it doesn't look any better than, say, *Fallout 2*, another isometric RPG released a couple of years ago. Alright, so it's brighter and more colourful and it uses your 3D card to make some of the spells slightly spectacular. So some of the monsters are a lot bigger than before and you can have more of them on-screen. So what? But then Blizzard has never dazzled us in the graphics area. Nor has it had to. *WarCraft* was an incredibly successful RTS, but nothing special to look at. One of the reasons is that its games are only very secondarily single-player experiences. Undemanding graphics mean that online play is always smooth, which it's why it's mostly American players who lap its games up. But that's no excuse for letting *Diablo II* look like such a complete dog. Core Design

“Your warriors fight to the bitter end, content to throw themselves with wild abandon against any enemy that comes into sight”

been released two or three years ago but, viewed now, *Diablo II* looks positively lame. Graphically there's only minimal improvement. The resolution is firmly stuck in a 640x480 sprite

IN PERSPECTIVE

It may be a narrow world of hack and slash RPGs, but *Vampire* stands out head and shoulders above the rest. *Nox* has some interesting ideas and at least features high resolutions, while *Vampire* has tons more gameplay than *Diablo II* and is in another world graphically.

NOX

VAMPIRE

DIABLO II

keep flogging us the same game, but at least every instalment of *Tomb Raider* looks much better than the previous one. And some of the biggest online games, *Allegiance* and *EverQuest* for instance, show that you can still have great graphics and play smoothly over the Net. Still, the old adage goes that it's gameplay and not graphics that counts.

HIT, MAIM, SKILL

While *Diablo II* is still a simple game – involving not much more than straightforward sword-hacking and spell-casting – it is definitely more complex than the first one.

There are improvements that were blindingly obvious necessities, such as the ability to run or being able to keep the mouse button pressed for continuous movement, rather than constantly pointing and



The Sorceress has all the best spells. Unsurprisingly.

clicking. There is a stamina bar that decreases rapidly as you run to stop you from constant flight. This is a combat game after all.

The interface works well. Here, once again, simplicity is the key and there's no reason to mess about with a tried and tested format that people feel extremely comfortable using.

The main improvements are the number of character classes now available (Necromancer, Paladin, Amazon, Barbarian and Sorceress) and the branching skill trees each of them has. As you gain experience points you can choose to spend them building up your stats or acquiring new special abilities and powering them up. Traditionally, only spell-casting characters have had this element of skill exploration, with mages discovering all sorts of new spells and warriors condemned to ham up their strength and dexterity. In *Diablo II*, all the characters have skills they can acquire and explore, making experience point-spending a much more interesting facet.

Another way of spending your money is hiring team-mates at towns to fight alongside you. You'll normally find a rogue or mercenary boss who sells you one of his warriors in much the same way that the blacksmith sells you his weapons. Each

warrior has their own attributes, so the more money you spend, the better a fighter you'll get. You can only have one of these oafs with you at any one time, although they will fight till the bitter end. As you'd expect, they're not known for their intelligence and will be content to throw themselves with wild abandon against any enemy that comes into sight. At least they're better than the sidekicks in *Daikatana*.



Ah... the good old Commodore – wait a minute!

LITTLE AND LARGE

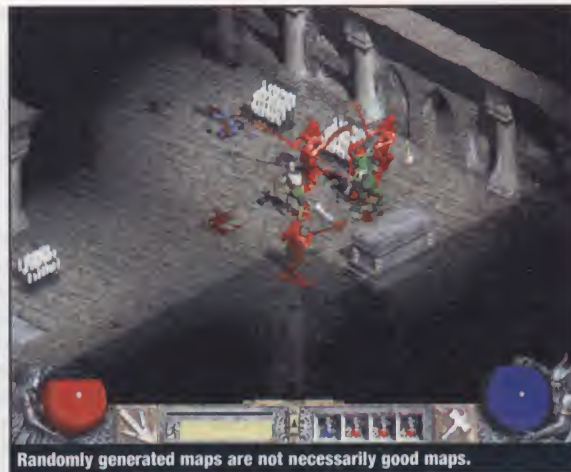
Each portion of dungeon is tiny compared to the sprawling levels found in the original. You are led down restrictive corridors much more and there is hardly any real exploration involved. On the other hand, the outdoor levels are wildly open and can leave you wandering around for ages

before you find what you're looking for. There is a wider variety of styles compared to the first game, with Egyptian backgrounds competing with the more common grey dungeons and castles, but the random plan creation clearly limits the quality of design. The randomness adds a lot to the replayability value, but do you really need it? After all, the game is absolutely massive, requiring an insane amount of hours to complete. And, if you want to try out all the classes, the time is multiplied. So why choose random, simplistic and almost empty maps instead of specifically created ones, apart maybe from the advantage of more unpredictable multiplayer games?

Not only are the dungeons created randomly, so are the towns and forests, so you can be sure to be stepping into, if not a completely different world, at least a less predictable environment.

Diablo II really is truly huge. Unlike its sprite-driven graphics, it is a game of monstrous proportions, easily three times bigger than the original. There are four towns which the quests are launched from (divided into three acts) and plenty of roaming wilderness, as well as the unavoidable dungeons.

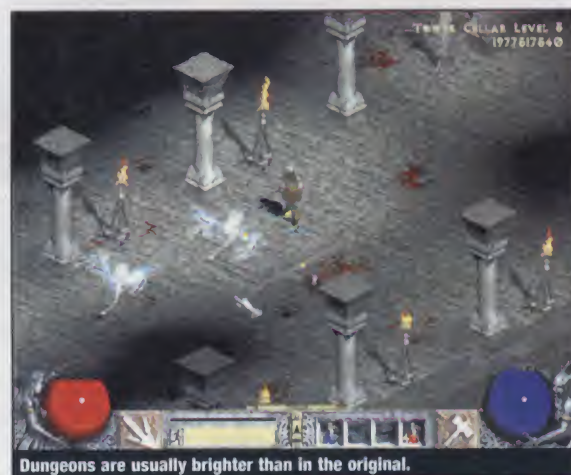
For such a plain-looking game, though, there's not an awful lot of interaction with the



Randomly generated maps are not necessarily good maps.



"One at a time, in a line, please."



Dungeons are usually brighter than in the original.

precious little environment to be found. The *Ultima* series at its height always created simple but logistically real worlds to explore. *Diablo* seems bent on its one-dimensionality. The legions of fans demand little more than straightforward hack and slash, and Blizzard certainly hasn't gone out of its way to provide much else.

KILL BY NUMBERS

One of the biggest attractions of *Diablo* has always been the anal obsession with character building, maxing out all your stats, levelling up, getting more

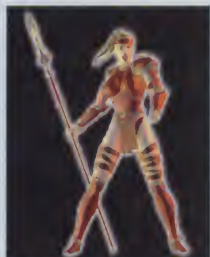
money and buying better weapons and armour. We could go off on a tangent about this numerical fixation being a metaphor for consumerist society, but we won't. There is, however, little doubt that the single-player game would have been left largely untouched by the hardcore Diablettes had you not been able to transport your character from your solo game to the multiplayer arena.

In the same way that the ancient *Gauntlet* (of which this is a direct successor) was OK on your own but an absolute classic when your friends joined in,



FIVE GO DOWN A DUNGEON

There may be no Timmy the dog, but there is lashings of slashings to be had with this lot



AMAZON

Somehow this lucky jungle woman has kept both her breasts intact, which makes it hard to see how she can be so accurate with her bow and arrow. Of

course, their mono-breastedness is far from being a proven historical fact, but there is definitely a distinct lack of horse riding bow-leggedness, or indeed of any horses. What you will get with the Amazon is great skill with the spear and arrows. The obvious advantage over a Barbarian or a Paladin is that you can conduct ranged attacks, thus keeping harmful creatures at bay long enough to split their heads open. You'll need more than a sharp and thin piece of wood to get rid of the bigger enemies. Or when you're facing a screen full of smaller ones, which is why you can acquire your own special abilities, you can turn your arrows into incredibly powerful magical weapons. You can also summon a muscular Valkyrie to fight with you.



NECROMANCER

If the Valkyrie is not entirely to your liking, perhaps too lively and healthy-looking, then the powers of this corpse-lover may be more up your dark and twisted

alley. The macabre Necromancer is rarely alone and is capable of summoning skeletons and golems from the fallen bodies of slain monsters. This is unquestionably the character to play if you want to give the game the sinister edge it lacks, but it's still not as darkly evil as we'd like it to be. Raising skeletons loses its charm after a while, but there are other spells like the one making corpses explode in the face of your enemies, or the one that traps them in a bone prison.



BARBARIAN

No RPG is complete without one of these muscly, brainless and unexciting characters. In *Diablo II* he comes in the bald and ethnic variety

rather than the dark and hairy Conan-clone shape. He's also capable of carrying weapons in both hands, turning him into a

real meat-grinder. If you thought the lawnmower at the end of Peter Jackson's *Brain Dead* was an effective weapon, wait till you see the Barbarian's double-hatchet wrist action. To make the character more interesting he also has his very own special skills tree. Since he's so much of an animal that he can't articulate words properly, most of these skills are in the form of battle-cries and work in a similar way to spells. You can use them to strike terror into the heart of enemy creatures or make you momentarily stronger. There are other skills, such as the useful but hilarious Leap Attack, where he prances about like a ballet dancer, or the whirlwind one, where he turns into a deadly Warner Bros Tasmanian Devil, whizzing around the screen.



SORCERESS

As with most RPGs, the truly magical character is the weakest to begin with but by far the strongest once you have enough experience. There is a large contingency

of fans whose sole purpose in life is to cast more and more powerful spells and who are only fulfilled when the palms of their hands are crackling with a freshly cast electric bolt. If you're one of them, then the Sorceress will be your character of choice. Her skill tree is the most rewarding and, when you reach the higher echelons, there is very little that can stand in your way. The downside is that her spells are the most familiar and least original, with the usual fare of firewalls, lightning bolts and meteor storms. You do get to summon a hydra to fight with you though.



PALADIN

The Paladin is a righteous but fascinating figure, combining the faith of a monk, the honour of a samurai and a shiny silver armour suit. Apart from the usual

fighting skills you can work up, you can create mystical hammers to spiral around (handy to knock skeletons into a big pile of bones) and heavenly shields to protect you. The most interesting concept, though, is the one of auras. There are defensive and offensive ones, and they work pretty much the same as curses or spells, with the most effective being the religious ones like Fanaticism and Meditation. Not that we condone the narrow-mindedness of fanatics, whether it's for religion or for *Diablo*...



Blessed fountains put an icon over your head.



Walls of fire: effective against wood.



You can hire mercenaries to help you out.



The old meteor storm. Or are they CS gas canisters.

YOU CAN'T BUY CLASS

It may not seem like too big a deal, but the jump from three character classes to five is made all the more important by the subtle effects on gameplay each of them has. Many of the differences are merely in the head of the player because there's not much variety in the way the game progresses by chomping through legions of monsters with swords or spell-cast snowballs. But there's enough to make you want to try out every character, and to level at least a couple of them up enough to see what they can really do.



You can't buy it, but you can certainly choose it.

Diablo really comes into its own online. We'll be reviewing the multiplayer side of it in our Online section in the very near future, when the community really kicks off. Blizzard is sure to address many of the problems people found first time round, not least of which was the rife cheating, where players would bump up their statistics into stratospheric numbers and proceed to murder any other player that should cross their path.

POSITIVELY EVIL

Despite all the criticisms, if *Diablo II* is essentially the same game with knobs on, it can't be all that bad. And it isn't. The gameplay is just as undemandingly addictive as ever, you can still choose the level of difficulty that suits you, and there's still a strange satisfaction to be had from levelling up and bringing down a large creature with a stroke of lightning or a mighty swing of the axe.

But, for all that this sequel has added, there is still something sorely missing. It has no sense of

atmosphere and feels more like a heartless expansion pack. I remember playing *Diablo* and reaching one of the first bosses, a mad demonic butcher, with arms as wide as cows and a disturbing aura of evil. I sauntered wildly through the dark dungeon, my racing heart willing my character to move faster, chased by this maniac and stumbling across horribly mutilated corpses broken in a puddle of blood you could almost smell. There is nothing like this here. Even when you see bodies impaled in a macabre landscape, you feel no quickening of the pulse, no terrified awe, you just click on them to see if there's any money hidden in them. You find hideously powerful creatures later in the game, but none have the presence to really scare you.

No doubt all you true *Diablo* heads out there will violently disagree with me and demand my head on a stake, but you will have already bought the game and played it to death anyway without the need of any vindication from our pages. We're sure you'll enjoy it

immensely. The rest of us, however, will turn our thoughts to a world of ever-progressing, ever-deepening, ever-evolving computer games. *Vampire* may be done and dusted, but there is the sheer majesty of the crowning masterpiece of role-playing, *Deus Ex*, to look forward to now. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Well balanced • Variety of classes • Branching skill levels • Atmospheric music
- DOWNERS** Not incredibly innovative • Poor low resolution graphics • Jerky animation • Repetitive gameplay

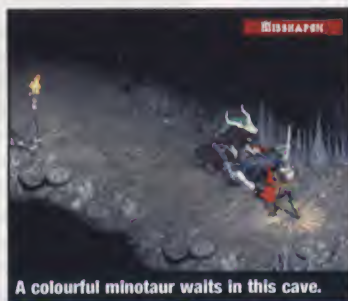
72 Playable, but disappointing

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233
Memory 32Mb RAM (64Mb for multiplayer) **WE SAY** A 3D card adds some much needed loveliness



You can open portals to the towns.



A colourful minotaur waits in this cave.



Better get some health potion into you.



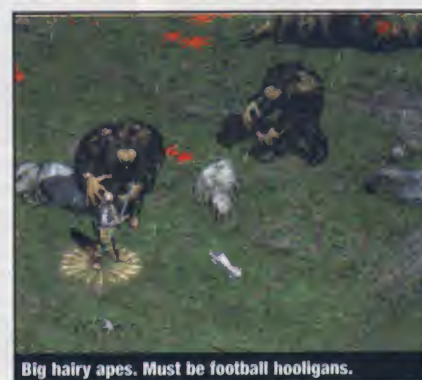
Conversations are useful, if a bit boring.



I wonder what this dungeon is called.



The open sand levels are a bit dry.



Big hairy apes. Must be football hooligans.

A Bird of Prey shoots its load.

KLINGON ACADEMY

★ £34.99 • Interplay • Out August

Karth Targ Narg Sath Hogth Togth. Martin Korda clears his nasal passages before reviewing *Klingon Academy*

The world is made up of many diverse types of people. There are those who lead an average life, some would say a normal life, working, sleeping, eating, drinking, and watching the

IN PERSPECTIVE

Klingon Academy can hardly be called an average space shooter and because of this, there isn't too much we can directly compare it with. The slow-paced action and Newtonian physics make it vaguely similar to *X - Beyond The Frontier*, although *KA* has far more emphasis on combat. If you prefer an adrenaline rush while blowing stuff up, then pick any one of *FreeSpace 2*, *X-Wing: Alliance* or *StarLancer*. Not only are they faster, they're also a lot more fun to play.

Klingon Academy

X - Beyond The Frontier

FreeSpace 2

X-Wing: Alliance

StarLancer

occasional TV show. Then there are those who take a vague interest in something, such as science fiction. They quote the odd line from *Star Wars*, remember fondly the cheesiness of *Battlestar Galactica*, and smile wistfully at the memory of cardboard scenery and bubble wrap space suits in the early *Star Trek* episodes. Finally, we have those who are prepared to take their interests that little bit further than most, and in the field of science fiction, there are none more infamous than the Trekkies.

If you fall into category three, you'll be particularly excited about *Klingon Academy*. None more so, than those of you who spend your weekends donning long-haired (sweat absorbing) panty liner padded wigs, furrowing your brows stupidly and speaking to each other as though you're trying to hack up a lung. All this while claiming to disinterested passers-by that your self-taught grasp of Welsh helps you pronounce Klingon more accurately. I digress. Yes, you people are going to love this game, even though it's hardly amazing.

The reason for this confident assumption is that everything about *KA* is true to the Klingon culture, such as honour, warrior spirit, the ships and the terminology. It's all accurately replicated here, and the six disks of excellently acted FMV enhance this feeling even further through an involving story line.

THE GAME'S AFOOT

After savouring the delights of gutting people with strangely shaped knives in *Klingon Honour Guard*, you now have the opportunity to try your hand at commanding and flying an array of Klingon vessels. The Shakespeare spouting General Chang, possibly the most charismatic Klingon of all time, takes centre stage. What more could you possibly want? Christopher Plumber? Well, if you're a *Star Trek* purist, you'll be pleased to know that he reprises his role as the irrepressible, pig tailed, one eyed megalomaniac. You even get to find out how he came across his cycloptic disposition. Don't worry though, I won't spoil it for you by telling you.

Set just before *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, *KA* installs you as a cadet in General Chang's military school. It's Chang's belief that a war with the Federation is imminent, and, rather than waiting idly for the inevitable, he

decides to simulate the conflict to test you. After this, you're put in charge of your very first starship, and you must embark on a series of missions designed not only to take the Federation by complete surprise, but also to test you to your limits through encounters with other races.

We've all heard this before in space combat games haven't we? Some puffed up general, gibbering on about how your first missions will push you to the boundaries of your abilities, only to find you're half way through the game within a couple of hours. Not so *Klingon Academy*. In fact, quite the opposite. Out of all the space combat games we've played, this is one of the hardest and, without

wanting to sound conceited, we've played quite a few.

This is somewhat of a double-edged sword, though. While it's always great to find a challenging game which takes weeks of perseverance to complete, there does need to be some semblance of balance, and that's exactly what *KA* lacks. Each mission takes, on average, about half an hour. This is not necessarily a bad thing if the game isn't too challenging, but is totally infuriating if it's simply too hard. It's not a problem when it happens with end missions, but having to replay the first few over and over again can be the most off putting thing in the world. You spend 25 minutes on it, only to die

★ WALKTHROUGH

MISSION POSSIBLE

A day in the life of a Klingon space pilot

Klingon Academy is no easy game. Unlike, say, *Wing Commander*, you will not breeze through the missions with ease. Let us demonstrate



D Before you set off on your mission to wipe out the Federation cowards, you'll need to set your ship up properly. Press '7' then '5' or just 'C' on its own, to cloak your ship. Get into position by pressing '2, 2' then '1', and then wait for the order to proceed. When prompted, warp to Beta Ceti, by pressing '2, 1, 2' and then '9'.



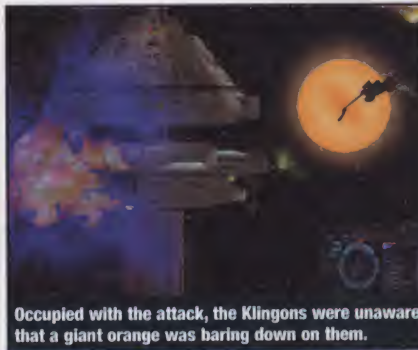
Space surfing is tipped to be a popular futuristic sport.



Green. The obvious colour for a spaceship.



General Chang, seconds before one of his eyes dropped out.



Occupied with the attack, the Klingons were unaware that a giant orange was baring down on them.



The helmsman swore that the Romulan ale had no effect on his driving ability.

right at the end. Then it's back to the beginning again. It's the type of annoyance that could well put many of you off early on.

HEADS DOWN DISPLAY

Klingon Academy is no ordinary space combat game. Rather than controlling a fighter, you are in charge of an entire cruiser and its crew. Along the bottom of the screen are the numbers one to nine, each one corresponding to a section of your ship eg helm, engineering, weapons etc. Before, during and after a battle, you must issue orders to these

both counts. Rather than concentrating purely on the tactical side of space combat, it tries to be a space shooter with tactical elements. However, because the ships are so large, move so slowly and are subject to Newtonian physics, the space battles are slow and cumbersome. Just finding the enemy can be a chore. To make matters worse though, it's a total nightmare trying to issue orders to your crew during a dogfight. You end up looking down at your keyboard and back to the screen to find the right combination of

keys help that much. You also get the option of just controlling your ship's weapons while your helmsman does the flying, but even this is a bit on the dull side.

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

Of course, it's not all bad, far from it in fact. Enemy AI is excellent, and you'll often see them using evasive manoeuvres, even on the easiest difficulty settings. The game's sound effects are excellent and the music rousing. The story line is gripping and well acted. Briefings are in depth and rarely are you in any doubt as to what your objectives are. Then there are the tactical possibilities like flying backwards, using space terrain such as planetary rings to your advantage and utilising your cloaking abilities to launch surprise attacks on unsuspecting enemy vessels. If you or enemy shields drop, then boarding becomes an option as a means of taking over a ship. You're given a huge diversity of ships to fly,

plenty of weapons to fire, and even an Internet Deathmatch mode. Then of course there's the accurate reproduction of the Klingon race, which is developed even further by this game.

TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY?

That is the question for those of you not quite so keen on the *Star Trek* universe. *KA* does offer something new, but it's far too laboured an affair for us to recommend over the likes of *FreeSpace 2* or *StarLancer*. If you're a *Star Trek* fanatic, you should find plenty to enjoy here. As for the rest of you, you just need to ask yourself if you want to play a slow paced, hugely difficult space combat game about Klingons, but one which, with perseverance, can be very rewarding. Perhaps General Chang would have summed it up with a Shakespeare paraphrase.

Hath not a gamer hands, organs... Preferences, dislikes? Interest us, do we not buy your

game? Challenge us, do we not persevere? Bore us, do we not seek a refund? To buy or not to buy? That is the question. **PCZ**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233 **Memory** 64Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 8Mb 3D Graphics Card **WE SAY** PII 300 or above

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Very Klingon • Interactive space terrain • Good diversity of ships and weapons • Well acted FMV sequences • Rousing music • Marathon missions
- DOWNERS** Very Klingon • Clumsy control interface • Poor graphics • Laboured space battles • Too hard at the start • Marathon missions

69 A flawed, thinking man's space combat game

END



2 When you emerge from warp, hold back and stay cloaked until you're given the order to proceed with the attack. Time to move in. Press '2', '4' then '1' to go to full impulse speed. Now press '8' and '4', then '8' and '7' repeatedly until you have targeted Station NZ-027. When the triangles round it turn red, you are in range to fire.



3 Before uncloaking, you'll want to prepare your ship for going in to battle. Press '1', '3' and then '1' again, to get your ship into its optimal battle configuration. Take out NZ-027, but don't bother using your torpedoes, as you'll need them later. Once you've taken the station out, cloak again with C.



4 By this stage, a Federation starship should have jumped in, but of course, they won't be able to see you. Fly close to them, and, when in range, uncloak and release a volley of shots at them. This surprise attack should take out one portion of their shields, and will give you an opening for a swift victory.



5 The enemy will now be reeling from your initial attack. Concentrate your fire on the Banting's weakened side, using torpedoes to rip up the hull. By firing a few well aimed shots, you shouldn't have too much trouble defeating it. If you do hit problems though, cloak and repair.



6 The final part of the mission can be done in two ways. Either take out the Federation mines before picking off the sensor probes, or use your cloaking device to take out the sensor probes one by one. The Federation mines are very powerful, so think carefully before attacking them. Once done, warp back to base.



Speak to NPCs for quest info. Quests mean experience kiddies.



Spell effects are marginally impressive.



Some of the background art is impressive, like this place for instance.

ICEWIND DALE

★ £34.99 • Virgin Interplay • Out now

A year and a half after the release of *Baldur's Gate*, Virgin/Interplay decide to release it again, albeit under a different name. **Chris Anderson** is confused

Baldur's Gate was a huge hit for Interplay at the end of 1998, and deservedly so. Inevitably, an expansion pack followed, and that was pretty good too by all accounts. Nothing much happened on the RPG scene after that, well nothing of any note, until the stunning *Planescape Torment* came along, and what a game *that* was. So began the wait for *Icewind Dale* and *Baldur's Gate 2*. BG2 is still some way off, but those lovely people at Virgin/Interplay have decided to release another game from the BG team (ie *Icewind Dale*) to fill the gap while you wait for the sequel to the big one. It's at this point that everything seems to have gone ever so slightly awry.

Icewind Dale has been pitched as an action/RPG right up to its release. Hack and slash action in

dark and dingy dungeons was the alleged premise for the game. Let's clear this little misunderstanding up right now. *Icewind Dale* is basically an expansion pack for *Baldur's Gate*. The gameplay is absolutely identical to that in BG. It even says on the back of the box that it uses the *Baldur's Gate* engine and we always believe what we read on the back of boxes.

This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it's certainly a major disappointment. We were honestly looking forward to this game immensely, expecting it to be a major improvement on BG if not exactly the next 'big thing' in RPGs. What we've got instead is a game that looks very dated now (it wasn't particularly impressive

graphically when it was released) and plays just like its best-selling predecessor, which must mean it's a bit good, right? Almost...

BALDUR'S DALE

The most noticeable difference between *Icewind Dale* and *Baldur's Gate* comes right at the beginning of the game on the

After much discussion, they agreed they were completely lost.



character generation screen. *Baldur's Gate* only gave you the option to create one character to begin with, and there were others you could recruit as you went through the game. With *Icewind Dale*, you create six characters before you even start. Bizarrely, if you don't create a whole party, you can still 'add' people in the middle of a game so if you have four characters you've levelled up a bit, you can add another two that have no clue what they are doing. Top tip then: create your whole party before you start. I would suggest three 'tanks' at the front (warrior, paladin, ranger) one healer (cleric) one mage, and a specialist mage (enchanters are very useful in combat with charm and sleep spells). From here on in it's the usual BG scenario: talk to everyone in your starting town and solve a few simple quests. As was the case

IN PERSPECTIVE

Planescape Torment is totally exceptional. *Baldur's Gate* was considered exceptional a year and a half ago. *Icewind Dale* is *Baldur's Gate*.

Planescape Torment

████████████████████

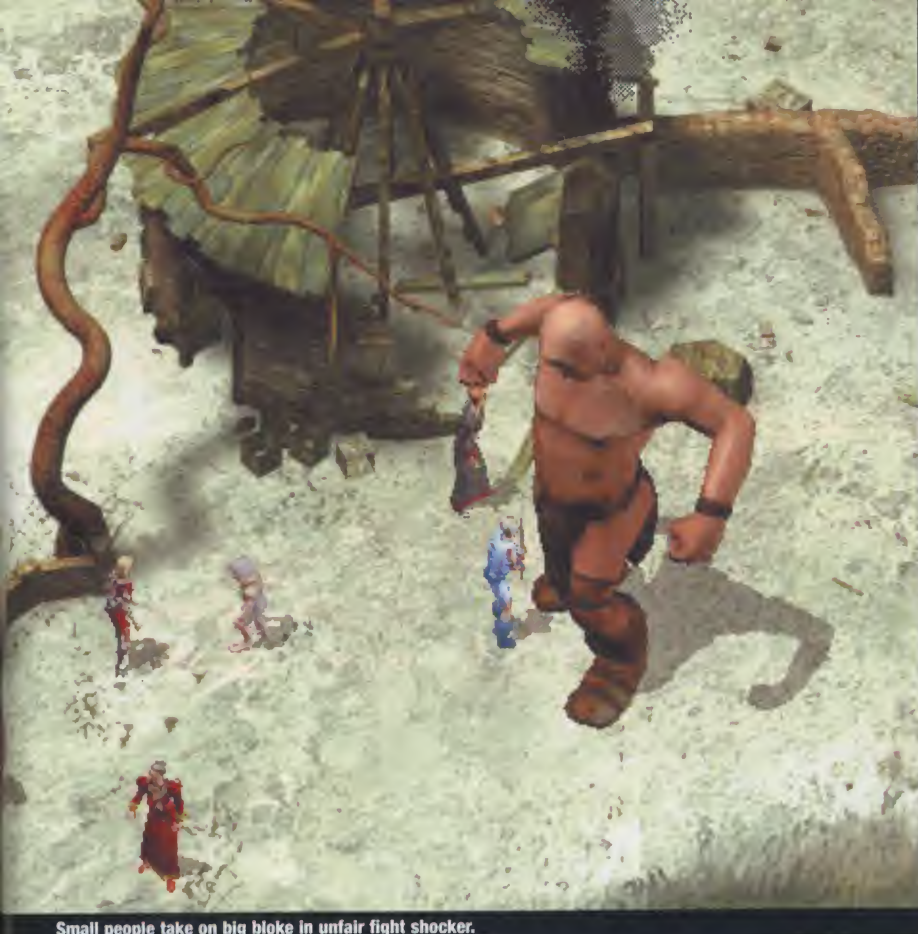
Icewind Dale

████████████████

Baldur's Gate

████████████████

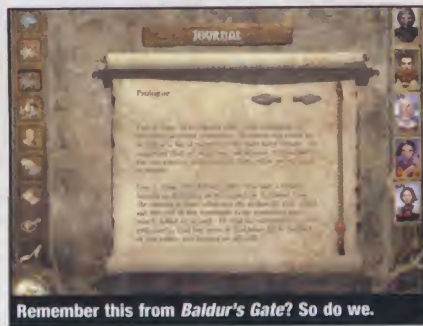
with *Baldur's Gate*, the nature of the game dictates you must complete *all* of the quests you are given in towns and villages. This is not because the game forces you to do so, but rather down to the way the experience system works. You get a lot more experience for solving quests than you do for killing monsters (kill a tough monster in a dungeon, get 100 experience points, deliver a loaf of bread to a villager, get 1000 experience points, how does that work?).



Small people take on big bloke in unfair fight shocker.



Ye olde inventory system.



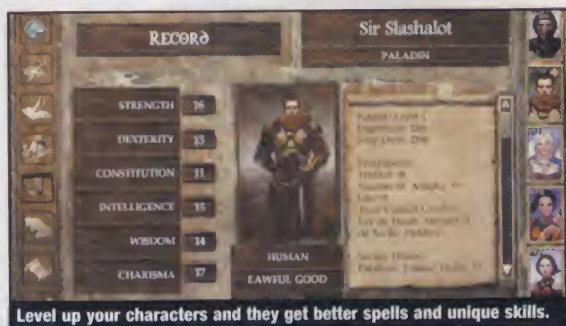
Remember this from Baldur's Gate? So do we.

SLOW DOWN

Anyone who has played *Planescape Torment* will have experienced the horrible slow down in the midst of gameplay that necessitated saving and reloading your game to solve the problem. Guess what? It happens in *Icewind Dale* too. It's probably a memory leak, or something. Whatever it is, it should never have made it into the finished game, and it happens often enough to be a complete pain. Expect a patch soon to solve the problem, and don't say we didn't warn you.



Slow down freezes the action. Just like this.



Level up your characters and they get better spells and unique skills.

So no matter how laborious it may seem to run errands in villages that seem to make no sense, you'd better do it. If you don't, prepare yourself for a very long wait as your characters literally crawl towards the next level.

Your starting town also serves as a launching point for an introduction into what passes for a plot. A warrior tells you there is trouble in a nearby land, and asks if you'd like to join an expedition to

ICEWIND GATE

Combat commences in real-time, but if you play the game that way you will die in about one minute flat. Pressing the space bar pauses the game so you can issue commands to the members of your party before unpause and watching the combat. So, it's basically a turn-based game with the action played out in real-time. Nothing wrong with that, *Planescape Torment* is similar in

Baldur's Gate as we were led to believe in the run-up to its release. A disappointment then, but I'm sure *Baldur's Gate* fans will take it to their hearts nonetheless. The rest of you would be advised to steer well clear of it. [C]

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS It's *Baldur's Gate* • Great character development • Many hours of gameplay
- DOWNERS It's *Baldur's Gate* • It looks crap • No noticeable enhancements over BG

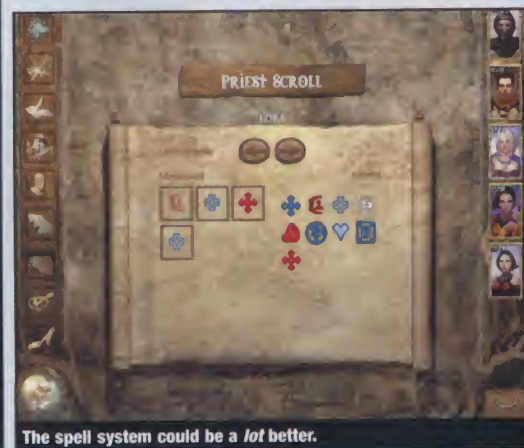
75 It looks a bit crap, but it isn't

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233
Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES**
600Mb hard drive space **WE SAY**
Minimum specs are fine

SPELLBOUND?

Magic users need to memorise their spells and then rest before they can use them. Use a spell in battle and it disappears till you rest again. Sorry, but this is a bit crap. How do they forget their spells so easily? A mana system would be much better. Admittedly, this is less of a problem when your characters get to higher levels and have more spell slots etc, but until then it remains an annoyance. Black Isle: try harder.



The spell system could be a lot better.

“No matter how laborious it may seem to run errands in villages, you'd better do it, or prepare yourself for a long wait as your characters crawl towards the next level”

investigate the problem. The plot is structured in such a way that you are always travelling to the next part of the map, and is more linear in this sense than *Baldur's Gate* was. Either way, it's just an excuse to go off somewhere for a bit of a scrap. Which brings us to combat and in turn places us firmly on familiar territory once again.

this respect but, for some reason, *Icewind Dale* feels distinctly archaic in its style of play. I suppose the graphics don't help, looking, as they do, two years out of date. But it is by no means a bad game. Indeed, it can be very engrossing once your characters level up a bit. But it most certainly is not the next step beyond



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UMPI



SERGEI BUBKA'S MILLENNIUM GAMES

★ £24.95 • Midas Interactive Entertainment • Out August

Strapping up his tennis elbow and covering up his corns, Craig Vaughan goes on a bid for Olympic gold

With Euro 2000 dominating the sporting headlines recently, you may be surprised to hear that the Olympic games will soon be upon us. Attempting to cash in on this worldwide spectacle, a host of track and field-based games are under starters orders, with the eventual medal winners yet to be decided. Having opted to spend the majority of their budget writing the game rather than snapping up the official Olympic licence, developer Midas has called upon legendary Ukrainian pole-vaulter Sergei Bubka to endorse this event-laden package.

employed in many golf games. Here, a circle is placed on the floor below the player, with a 'sweet spot' occupying a third of it. With some rhythmic tapping of the mouse button – timed to coincide with the presence of a marker as it speeds through the 'sweet spot' – it's possible to build up speed. In use, this method proves somewhat problematic. Admittedly it's less frantic than belting the keyboard, and it does allow easier retention of full power once achieved. However, it takes longer to 'peak' and the resulting delay puts most world records tantalisingly out of reach. Also, because heavy emphasis is placed on monitoring the circle,

“The qualifying mode dumps you in a 3rd rate arena – devoid of decent crowds – while you attempt to attain Olympic standard”

Unfortunately, the potential variety offered by the 19 events (all track and field – there are no diving or weightlifting comps here) is nullified by the fact that the disciplines within each of the four categories (sprints, long distance running, throwing and jumping) share identical control mechanics. This soon induces a sense of monotonous repetition, with proceedings being reduced to just four distinct styles of gameplay. Anyone the wrong side of age 25 will recall the traditional button-bashing method of progress relied upon throughout: continued rapid tapping of two keys provides momentum, while a dedicated action button determines the timing of jumps and trajectory of throws.

it's far too easy to neglect the action button, resulting in repeated failure to qualify.

GOING FOR GOLD

These frustrations are compounded by ropey animation throughout, a tutorial that is only relevant to mouse users, suspect AI within certain events (it's nearly as quick running through the 110m hurdles as it is jumping over them) and the desolate qualifying mode which dumps you in 3rd rate arenas – devoid of decent crowds and fellow competitors – while you attempt to attain Olympic standard. As rough as it is around the edges, matters do improve somewhat with progress – having qualified for competitive events, the sporting arenas expand in scope and visual appeal, while the crowds swell in number and volume. Additionally, there's a cracking split-screen two-player mode that conclusively proves you can't beat head-to-head gaming of this type (if

IN PERSPECTIVE

Track and field sports games are as rare as British Olympic medals. Mind you, with the Sydney games imminent, keyboard and mouse manufacturers are set for a busy summer. Meanwhile, for diverse sporting action, try one of these.

FIFA 2000

Brian Lara Cricket

NBA Live 2000

PGA 2000

playing alone, the CPU opponents provide fearsome competition in their relentless pursuit of gold). A comprehensive replay system allows medal-winning performances to be saved for posterity and the additional practice and training modes add a degree of longevity. Ultimately though, it's the multiplayer mayhem (especially against human foe) that saves the day. So, while it's clear that Midas hasn't got the most polished or diverse of games, the fact that it looks set to be first out of the blocks – with multiplayer LAN support too – could mean that, instead of failing to qualify, it might well be in the hunt for a medal. **PCW**

PCZ VERDICT

↑ **UPPERS** Plenty of graphical variety • Excellent two-player split-screen action

↓ **DOWNERS** Repetitive control mechanics and gameplay • It's likely to kill your keyboard • Frustrates with the mouse

65 Accessible short-lived fun, set to face stiff opposition

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM
ALSO REQUIRES Direct 3D graphics card



Pole vault: Sergei would be proud of this effort.



110m hurdles: last in a field of one, lying down on the job.



Hammer: get this wrong and you're going to kill someone.



100m sprint: I know I dropped my contact lens here somewhere

MEN AND MICE

Perhaps recognising the wear-and-tear potential of this method, an alternative has thoughtfully been included. Making clever use of the mouse, it's a modified version of the mechanics

TERMINUS

★ £TBC • Vicarious Visions • Out September

When we told him to review *Terminus*, John Shiali spent a couple of days down at the local bus depot. Poor deluded fellow



We first saw *Terminus* almost three years ago as Karthik Bala, head of Vicarious Visions, gave a select few people a private preview in a hotel at ECTS. Karthik explained that he wanted to create a space-faring RPG, with far more depth than your average *Wing Commander* style of shoot 'em up. Karthik resisted lucrative publishing offers in order to keep control of the direction *Terminus* took, and Vicarious even took contracts porting console titles in order to keep funding its baby. Finally, after three and a half years of development, the game's been launched and the big question is, can it do for the space sim what *Deus Ex* and *System Shock 2* have done for the first-person shooter?

WHERE IS MY COCKPIT?

Terminus pitches you as a space-ship pilot at the beginning of 2197. Friction between Earth and the independent Mars colonies have brought the solar system to

the brink of war. With pirate clans and mercenaries battling each other, our corner of the galaxy is a dangerous place to live.

FLY! BE FREE!

There are several different ways to play the game and all of these are also available to play online, except for Training (which is just a short offline series of missions to familiarise you with your ship): Gauntlet is a deathmatch style game taking place across the whole solar system, or an enclosed area of space. Zero-G Hockey is a team game where players use whatever equipment in their ships to get a puck in the opposing goal. Far more interesting are the Story and Freeform modes.

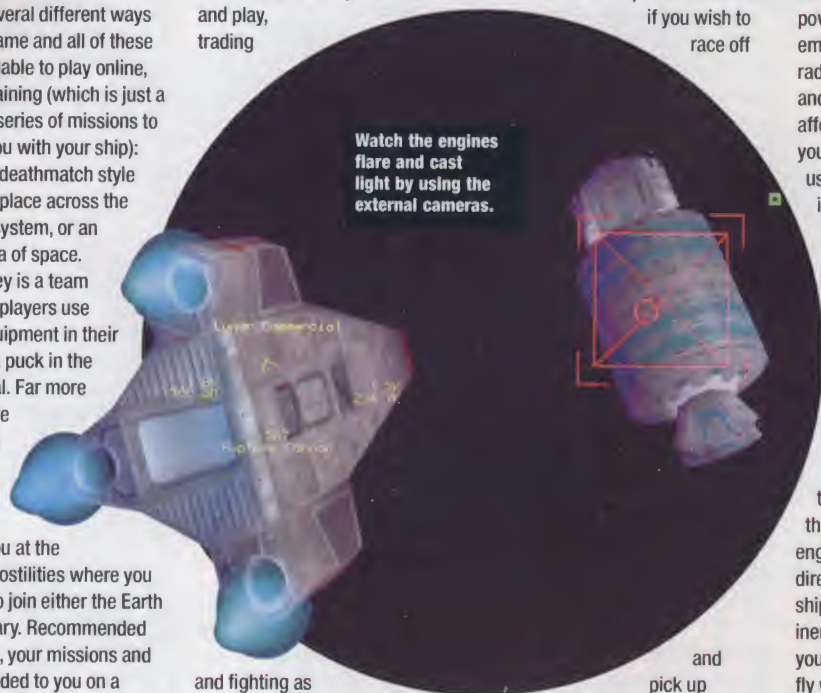
Story mode puts you at the outbreak of hostilities where you can choose to join either the Earth or Mars military. Recommended for beginners, your missions and ships are handed to you on a plate, with all mod cons being provided by your chosen side. For a more hands-on approach, you can choose the life of a pirate or mercenary where you have to trade and fight to finance your operations. If you take on a

mercenary mission, you'll have to make sure you can supply your own ships and equipment to make it successful and pick up your fee. You also need to watch out for the enemies you make, as the various factions remember when you stood on their toes.

Freeform mode is exactly as it sounds. You are given the open-ended *Terminus* solar system and simply told to go out and play, trading

run you through the Mars-Earth war before dropping back to the open-ended Freeform mode.

Getting into the game proper, you're presented with a space-station setting where you can chat to the locals, read the newscasts, trade commodities and items with other players, or buy and equip ships. Even in space, you can still be paged with important missions if you wish to race off



and fighting as the other ships go about their business. If you're playing the single player game and want a freeplot, Elite style game with a backplot storyline, we'd recommend starting with the Story mode, as the game will

and pick up special assignments.

Here you start to see the attention to detail that Vicarious Visions have implemented. It's quite possible to upgrade your ship with engines big enough to tear it apart as soon as you turn

IN PERSPECTIVE

While *Terminus* is not as pretty, it does pack a lot more in than other recent space-sims. If you can live with the ugly interface screens, it's an atmospheric and brave attempt to give space-simmers a different, playing experience. If you want a more trigger-happy shooter, then go for *Starlancer* or *Freespace 2* instead.

Terminus

Freespace 2

X: Beyond The Frontier

Starlancer

the ignition key. Hull stress, fuel, power systems, stealth and emissions, component damage, radiation effects on the pilot, and more are all modelled and affected by the gear you put into your ship. Even the weapons you use make a huge difference. For instance, mounting a large kinetic weapon on a small ship will put huge stress on the hull when you fire it.

ALL OVER THE PLACE

Launching your ship into space, you'll find that *Terminus* uses a Newtonian flight model, allowing six degrees-of-freedom. Although there is a compensation mode that has the computer firing the engines to keep you flying in the direction you are pointing, the ship still has to fight against inertia. For combat purposes, you're better off learning how to fly with compensators disabled. In this way you can spin and bring your weapons to bear in one direction, while your ship travels in another. If you really can't handle this, you can turn the inertial flight model right down to a *Wing Commander* point-and-

★ WALKTHROUGH

DAY TRIP TO JUPITER

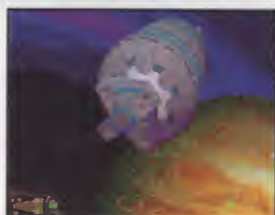
Fancy zipping off to Io for a bit of shopping? Here's how you travel about the *Terminus* solar system...



1 First you pull up the navigation map and decide where you want to go or who you want to track. You can use filters and searches, and, if you are in the military, you can even get info on ship movements. Lock your destination and your nav computer will guide you.



2 Leave the space station and follow your nav computer to the Vortex gates, jumping through as many gates as you need to get to your destination. Watch out for any traffic coming through the gate, and keep an eye on the time if you are racing to meet a mission deadline.

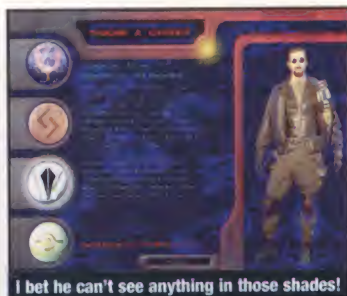


3 Ahh, here we are in Jupiter space, and there's our destination, the Io space station, in high orbit around the red giant itself. Thank you very much for flying with us, and be sure to take all your belongings with you as you leave the spacecraft.



4 Once we are docked at the station, you can start looking for contracts, or chatting to the bar staff, or trading and upgrading your ship. But be sure to keep your hand on your wallet though, because they are a very shifty looking bunch.

END



I bet he can't see anything in those shades!



Dodge the debris to keep your hull intact.



Boozing it up with the fly boys.



Parking at the end of the 22nd Century.



Missiles awaaaaay!

squirt. Bear in mind that, in online games, this won't give you an advantage, as the server operator decides how realistic the flight model is for everyone.

The HUD is a little small in high-res, but with an *Elite*-style radar, multifunction displays and ship trails, it does its job well enough, picking up ships too far away to see with the naked eye, and giving a good sense of depth to the surrounding area. Space is pretty dark, so learning to fly by your instruments is a must.

The in-game graphics are pretty good, but not quite up to the latest cutting edge technology. The polygon count has been kept low in order to handle situations when 50 online players turn up at the same place. The textures and moody light-

sourcing works well, with light levels tailing off as you get further away from the sun, spinning space stations, engine flares and lots more nice graphical touches.

Missions themselves can be varied, and range from simple

LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP

Terminus loses points for its out-of-date front-end interface, and doesn't gain them on its good-but-not-stellar graphics engine. Where it succeeds is the successful implementation of a freeform

this in a persistent online universe and it's only a matter of time before the clans and squadrons start battling across the Internet for supremacy. Also worth a mention is Todd Maston's musical score, which is excellent and sounds like Christopher Franke's score for *Babylon 5*. Dark and moody instrumentals set the scene and add a lot of atmosphere to the proceedings, suiting the space-bound setting of the game.

Overall, while not as flashy as other recent space-sims, *Terminus* has lots of substance. It packs so much into the game that any self-respecting space-simmer should grab a copy just as soon as it hits the store shelves. Check out the exclusive demo on our cover CD and you'll see why. **PCZ**

“With pirate clans and mercenaries battling each other, our corner of the galaxy is a dangerous place to live”

patrol or mining to escort, spying, assassination or cargo hijacking – yes, you can ‘persuade’ an enemy to drop its cargo so you can scoop it up. If you’re lazy, you can even sub-contract jobs out to other pilots. If you don’t fancy the violent life, you can simply trade goods to make your bank manager happy.

solar system with combat and trading missions, a backplot storyline, RPG elements, ship design, and the inclusion of a real physics model. There's even a flight recorder and a scene manager for you to edit your most spectacular successes into movies. More importantly, *Terminus* allows players to do all

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Depth and storyline •

Multiple career paths • A whole solar system to play in • Online longevity • Brave attempt to do something different

DOWNERS Crusty front-end screens

• Not quite cutting-edge graphics • Phone bills for online play • No British distributor as yet

86 Most complete space-sim of the last few years

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PIII-300 Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Direct 3D video card. **WE SAY** 2nd Generation 3D accelerator



Coming in to land on your first training mission.



Activate a Vortex gate and fly through. Mind your paintwork!



Ship go boom!

DINO CRISIS

★ £29.99 • Virgin Interactive • Out now

James Lyon is highly unimpressed with the lack of anything vaguely scary or hard to master in the new PC version of *Dino Crisis*

While Capcom has already marked its territory in the world of consoles, its PC output, it is fair to say, isn't quite up to the same levels. Though most of it is more suited to Sony's machine and the like, when we do get the chance of seeing something moderately interesting, we then have to wait patiently until we can get our hands on a conversion. It happened with the *Resident Evils* and it's happening here with *Dino Crisis*. After a successful PlayStation release last Christmas, Capcom has decided to wring more profit out of the game by bringing it back out of early retirement for a bout on the PC.

A breakaway extension of the *Resident Evil* franchise, *Dino Crisis* features almost exactly the same formula, although the flesh-eating zombies are replaced with your common-or-garden variety of dinosaurs. After parachuting into a secret island research facility in search of a missing scientist, you, playing as Regina, have to find a way to get off again after discovering that the place has been overrun by horrible lizards. As far as plots go, it's hardly the most original and there's a strong stench of B-movie. If you anticipate the usual bad voice acting and feeble plot twists, you could almost write the game yourself.

The plot's mostly linear but, about two or three times during the game, diverges at different points letting you choose which path it's best to go down. Choosing which way to go doesn't make any drastic changes to the plot but it does at least add to the replay value, which the game would otherwise lack.

STUCK IN THE STONE AGE

Like a bad omen, one of the first things to confront you when loading up the game is the astonishingly low, PlayStation resolution of

the menu screen. You'd be forgiven for thinking you were looking at a title from the 486 days, rather than a part of today's cutting edge software, as you navigate your way around the blocky pixels. Into the game proper and a 3D card noticeably improves on the original's visuals, but you're still stuck with a maximum resolution of 640x480. And, even if we don't put the game down for this, we can't deny the sterile graphics that represent the base, as the bleak grey tone throughout has a habit of sapping some of the necessary atmosphere. The way the

“Most puzzles are made up of insultingly simple tasks, such as matching colours together or picking words out of codes”

backgrounds sometimes move along fixed planes as you walk makes up a little in this department as it's quite a novel effect, but naturally, it wears off after the umpteenth time.

Aside from the slight 3D card touch up, the transfer from PS to PC has seen some other minor improvements in an effort to entertain an audience that might actually expect a bit more after the long wait. Are you ready for this? Well, instead of letting you discover the four different costumes hidden in the game, it has put them in for you at the start. They'll be queuing around the block for that, Capcom. It has also included a version of the PlayStation's hidden *Operation Wipeout* subgame in the start

IN PERSPECTIVE

Not a patch on *RE2*, but far better than *Martian Gothic*. *Alone In The Dark*'s getting along a bit now, but we'll put it in for posterity.

RE2

Dino Crisis

Martian Gothic

Alone In The Dark

menu – a challenge to shoot as many dinosaurs as possible in as short a time as possible. It's nothing more than Regina wandering around the original map getting attacked in a frustrating way that plagues

the main game. The fact that you can upload your score on to the Internet doesn't really seem like the sales-winner Capcom thought it was.

The loading door screens necessary on the PlayStation also make a comeback on the PC, probably more for the completeness factor than anything else. The good news is that they're obviously much faster, meaning walking from one location to another isn't quite the tedious chore it otherwise could have been.

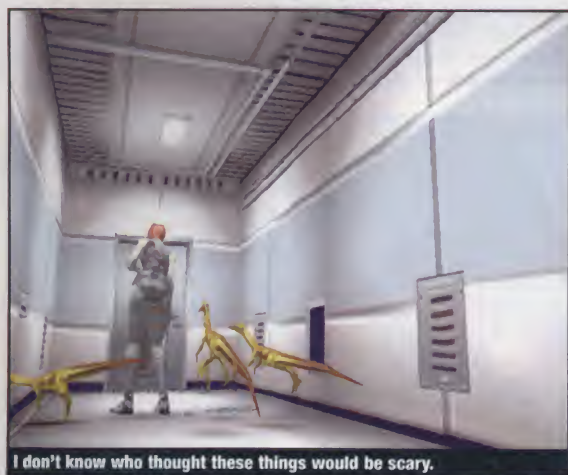
LOCK AND LOAD

As for the game itself, going up against the various dinosaurs is rather a tricky business. The controls are frustrating to use in a difficult situation and feel clumsy when up against the speed and savagery of the enemy.

The inclusion of a 180° quick-turn key is a blessing in cases when running away seems like a good solution. However, when actually trying to fight, it's impossible to get a few shots at anything from close up without them jumping up to successfully attack you.



It's no *Resident Evil*.



I don't know who thought these things would be scary.



Grey seems to be the colour of choice here.



Regina ponders on whether she should hire out *Jurassic Park*.



Your boss and all-round stereotypical moody guy.

Once this happens, your character spends a frustrating amount of time out of your direct control as she's knocked to the floor or bitten and you jab at the keys attempting to get her to safety. Most times you'll want to avoid the dinosaurs altogether by dodging past them and saving your ammo for the harder versions later on.

It does lack credibility, though, as you run past a Velociraptor several times as it prowls along the middle of a corridor, trying not to give him time to react. Which leads on to the illogical situation of you being perfectly safe from harm if you start reading a memo or something – even though there's a Raptor half an inch from Regina's neck when commencing. The controls don't do justice to the situation of avoidance either, often making you slide along walls like a drunken sailor on roller skates.

The actual adventuring aspect is rather poor as well. The majority of puzzles are made up of insultingly simple tasks, such as matching colours together or picking words out of codes. *Dino Crisis* brings back vaguely disturbing memories of the interactive movie genre, with its sledgehammer approach of inserting things like this into the plot in order to make an excuse to watch it. True, *Resident Evil* did the same thing, but somehow managed to pull it off with its pride intact. That's not to say it's as bad as something like *The 7th Guest*, but often the puzzles feel like a means to stop you from opening doors and nothing else.

THE HORROR, THE HORROR

Dino Crisis loses the tension of survival horror that *RE2* has in spades. As was mentioned on its PlayStation release, dinosaurs just don't put the willies up people quite as much as skinless dogs do. There's a sense of apathy to be felt when playing through the game, since there's not quite the same level of fear as you walk along trying not to imagine what's waiting around the next corner.

Indeed, *Dino Crisis* never caused as much excitement on the PlayStation as the other survival horror games. The port to the PC does little to improve on the way the game looks and plays. We could initially overlook the problems at the start of the game, but, after continuous playing, the annoying combat became more apparent as the dinosaurs got harder. The puzzles, don't really go anywhere either. But, for all its faults, it does have a certain drive behind it that

warrants some interest in finding out how the story progresses.

Capcom can produce great games for consoles when it tries, so it's a shame they don't pay more attention to the PC market. *Dino Crisis* could have done with a makeover because, compared to titles like the Dreamcast's recently-released *Code Veronica*, it looks outdated and outdone. **PC**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Strangely engrossing plot •

Slightly different paths to follow

DOWNERS Unskippable cut-

scenes • Poor controls •

Sterile graphics

56 A dinosaur game that (ho ho!) lacks bite

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor

P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO**

REQUIRES 4Mb 3D card **WE SAY**

PII 400, 64Mb RAM



"Find a penny, pick it up..."



Regina looks for the controls to the lab's Jacuzzi.



Passageway to the Power Room

The door opening screens are still with us.

THE DINO CRISIS BUMPER PUZZLE COMPENDIUM



1 Match the battery colours to the colour of the switches. Unfortunately, Capcom has neglected to mention how people with colour blindness possibly get past this puzzle. I should sue.



2 Type in the code to open the safe. What's this? Do we need to hack into the mainframe, bypass the encryption routine and crack the password? No, we have to look at a memo.



3 Match the different coloured pipes to the ones on the opposite side. Now this one's a bit trickier. I was on it for, ooh, at least five minutes. My application to Mensa is in the post.



4 Eliminate the unneeded letters to find the password. I take it the company who run this place regret contracting the security firm with the biggest advert in the Yellow Pages now.



Our boys take an unexpected early wicket against the Aussies.



There are loads of individual player statistics to trawl your way through.

INTERNATIONAL CRICKET CAPTAIN 2000

★ £29.95 • Empire Sport • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 2Mb video card **WE SAY** P266 with 32Mb RAM

Cricket isn't the most dynamic of spectator sports, so it's not surprising that developers have generally steered clear of writing games based on it. However, during last year's World Cup, *Empire Interactive* broke its duck with the hugely successful *International Cricket Captain 2* (PCZ 82, 85 per cent), which masterfully overcame the universal failing of previous offerings – the feeling of never being in control of the action – by giving gamers strategic command as captain, rather than hands-on control as an individual bowler or batsman. A year later, that formula has been closely revisited, with feelings of déjà vu being solidified by the return of Jonathan Agnew as commentator and Wisden as the masters of all things stats related. Likewise, little has changed graphically, with the in-game action being depicted adequately rather than with flair. Although purists and statisticians would argue that visuals are secondary to the strategy, moments of outrageous

fielding (catches by players with their back to the action and inertia-defying wicket keepers) serve only to detract from the otherwise authentic atmosphere. As in the prequel, the captaincy assumes *Championship Manager*-like proportions – allowing control of day-to-day tasks like hiring, firing, training, team selection and in-game tactical planning (such as varying line, length and aggression of bowlers; rotating the field; keeping strike and taking the new ball). While the obligatory single and two-player options remain (one-off game, County Championship and Internationals) and there's the unenviable opportunity to re-live England's most historic defeats and challenge fellow willow-heads online, little else has changed during the intervening year. So, as competent as the package is, it will undoubtedly be handicapped by the fact that non-cricket fans won't waste time pondering whether this update is worth their attention, and owners of the original will struggle to justify further expenditure.

Craig Vaughan

PCZVERDICT

60%

SUZUKI ALSTARE EXTREME RACING

★ £34.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb Direct3D compatible Video Card **WE SAY** P450, 64Mb RAM and a decent card

From the same developer and publisher that brought us the long-forgotten *Redline Racer*, this is essentially that game with a bit of a facelift and a pointless licence tagged on. As such, it's a wholly arcade-oriented affair, with superbikes comfortably traversing sand and snow, as well as more standard asphalt-based surfaces. Such trivialities as braking for corners are largely bypassed, and the action is sometimes impossibly fast, with the generically realised scenery flashing past in the blink of an eye. Come off, and you're tossed around like the proverbial rag doll.

Apart from having a pretty stupid name, *Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing* adds very little to the bike genre, or indeed to the human race, for that matter. That said, as a wholly unambitious racer, it achieves its goal comfortably. At best, it's a mildly bearable way of spending an afternoon when Wimbledon's on the telly and there's nothing better to do.

Steve Hill

PCZVERDICT

52%



Life's a beach in *Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing*.

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD: RACING FOR HOME

★ £29.99 • Southpeak Interactive • Out now



"Just two good ol' boys..."



"Never meanin' no harm..."

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P300 Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D accelerator card **WE SAY** Who cares?

Nostalgia may be a thing of the past, but it's as good a way as any of disguising a mediocre game. Without *The Dukes Of Hazzard* licence, there would be no reason whatsoever to play this; the handling is a shambles, the graphics are glitchy, and the gameplay is largely uninspired. It doesn't even support a joystick.

Essentially a series of interactive episodes, the whole thing can comfortably be played through in a day, and it would be a particularly keen fan who would ever return to it again. Besides, the only reason for watching *The Dukes of Hazzard* was to strum your banjo over redneck temptress Daisy Duke, a memory that is sadly tarnished by this half-arsed effort of a game.

Steve Hill

PCZVERDICT

37%



Martin thrashed Kuerten, even after his leg dropped off.

ALL STAR TENNIS 2000

★ £34.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32MB RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb graphics card **WE SAY** P11266, a 4Mb 3D card and a gamepad.

PCZONE PANTS

It's often said that after the pleasure comes the pain. Last month we were treated to the best PC tennis sim ever, *Open Tennis 2000*, so it was somewhat inevitable that this month's offering would find it rather difficult to compete. However, *All Star Tennis 2000* doesn't just struggle to measure up, it also manages to fail spectacularly.

From the pitiful graphics to the dreadful controls, there are very few redeeming features to the game. The gameplay doesn't even feel like tennis, but instead gives you the sense that you're playing a game of giant ping-pong. Then there's the sound effects. It took us five minutes to stop laughing, as one bloke in the crowd shouted encouragement to our player, over and over again, even though the match had already finished. We could go on, but I think you're probably getting the picture by now.

A couple of decent features include multiplayer seasons, a few real life players such as Todd Martin, doubles play and, well, that's about it actually. There's nothing else positive to say; in fact everything about *AST2000* just feels rushed and unfinished.

Martin Korda

PCZ VERDICT

19%

SAMMY SOSA'S HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2001

★ £34.99 • 3DO • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb Graphics card **WE SAY** A P233 and a 3D card

Who the hell is Sammy Sosa? And do we really care if he's on heat? We keep going on about baseball games being deadly boring and we keep wondering just who the hell buys them, and we're not about to stop that intriguing line of subtle criticism now.

American developers keep making them and American people keep buying them, but that's understandable given it's a national obsession. But

just who buys them here? Exchange students? For whatever reason, here's another one. And not a particularly good one either. Sammy Sosa has put his name to a few other *High Heats*, all of which are decidedly average. The graphics for this update are pretty dodgy, the commentary and sound effects are poor and you never feel in control of the action. Personally, if we're going to hit balls with sticks, we'd prefer the highly polished *Triple Play* from EA.

Mark Hill

PCZ VERDICT

51%



There's a strange mixture of high detail and complete lack of it in the graphics.

COMBAT MISSION

★ US\$45 • www.battlefront.com • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** Horrendous slow down on anything but a top-end system

It's sad to say that the days of going to your local boozer and being accosted by a drunken old bloke who starts to recount, "when I was in the war..." are gone. No honestly. However, all is not lost because now you can play *Combat Mission* and then go to the pub and bore others instead. It's a dirty job but someone's got to do it.

Set in Europe after the 1944 D-Day landings, the game puts you in charge of either the Allies or the Axis – in a fight to the death. Did we say it was turn-based and not RTS? Looking at the screen shots you'd be forgiven for assuming the game is a WWII *C&C* clone, but it isn't. And what's more the game has broken the two unwritten rules of all WWII Strategy games:

- 1 Thou shalt always use hex's
- 2 Thy graphics engine shall be created from Beelzebub's arse.

Combat Mission makes a refreshing change as it is in spinny-rotaty-3D (as opposed to the usual top-down crap) and uses a tile format.

But eye candy alone does not a good game make. The developers have taken this to heart, as the game is accurate in terms of the troops and equipment available. German Tigers vs British Commandos? No Problem. The only major downside is that the campaign modes are way too easy to complete.

This game is a major step forward, although, even on a high-spec machine, the engine struggles when you play the gigantic maps with loads of units.

Daniel Emery

PCZ VERDICT

75%



This really is a turn-based strategy game – honest.



No this isn't one of those weird village fete recreations.



EARTH 2150



FORCE COMMANDER



GROUND CONTROL

PCZ SUPERTEST

3D REAL-TIME



PHOTOGRAPHY Simon Clay ILLUSTRATION Napoleón B

⬆ L to R: ⬆ Richie Shoemaker reviewed *Shogun: Total War* and has a lust for carnage on a grand scale. ⬆ Martin Korda is well versed in the way of the warrior and is adept at following orders (tea, coffee, etc). ⬆ Paul Presley went nuts over *Homeworld* last year and has yet to shut up about it. ⬆ Keith Pullin reviewed *Ground Control* last month and has been snarling ever since. ⬆ Dave Woods is regularly spoiling for a fight, usually at around 11pm outside The Crown & Sceptre.



STRATEGY

The strategy game is slowly changing. Gone (or going) are elements such as 'turns' and managing resources. In comes 3D and coloured lens flares. We round up the latest batch of 'new-age' titles and see what reigns supreme

★ MARSHALLING THE TROOPS: Paul Presley



Fashion. The most damaging aspect of modern life. One day we're all wearing jeans with flares so large you can go windsurfing without a sail, the next we're laughing and pointing with scornful derision at anyone who dares to transgress the combat trousers and 'porn star' emblazoned t-shirt look. Then some pointless egomaniac in Milan or Paris injects a quart of heroin into his anus, declares that flares are the new 'brown' and suddenly we're all forced to sport the tent-sized leggings look or be cast out like lepers. Anyone fancy a mint? Piss off, Tic-Tacs only you sad waste of a man. Fashion. We hate it.

The same is true of the games world (in case you were wondering). Until *Command & Conquer* blazed onto the scene, strategy games were solely the domain of bearded geekazoids with unhealthy hexagonal fixations, cupboards full of painted lead miniatures and bookshelves full of military tactic manuals. Then Westwood made

things acceptable to the trendy masses and now everyone loves them. Not wargames you understand. Oh no. That's still a world of unwashed Y-fronts and 38-year old virgins living with their parents. But *strategy* games are cool, especially if they're all in real-time 3D.

It won't last of course. Fashion, as pointed out earlier, is cyclical. We can already see how strategy games are being shaped (*Ground Control's* erosion of resource management and *Shogun's* nod towards large-scale battles). It happens to all genres. One day we'll be pointing at football games as the saddest waste of mankind's limited life-span, you mark my words. Then where will the likes of Steve Hill be, eh?

Anyway, until that fabled day arrives, let's look at how the mystical third dimension has changed the strategy game scene over the past six months and see if the usual collection of oddballs and lost drunkards that make up the *ZONE Crew*(™) can offer any insight into what lies ahead...



EARTH 2150

Richie: I didn't really rate *Earth 2150* myself because, despite all of the nice features and customisation options, it felt throughout as though you were just playing a computer game. Whereas with something like *Shogun* you're there.

Prezzer: What, it actually takes you to the 16th Century?

Keith: It teleports you there.

Richie: I didn't much like the design of the units. It's all typical sci-fi pap. I was talking to Phil Wand who reviewed it...

Prezzer: What did we give it?

Keith: 86 per cent

Prezzer: We seem to give every RTS 86 per cent.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Richie: We both agreed it's a game you have to put a bit of time into before you understand the fact that you can change it to suit your needs. You can even make your own units and that. Trouble is the units all look a bit shit. But then I thought the *Warzone* units looked a bit shit as well.

Keith: One of the reasons it scored highly was because of the multiple camera windows thing. That's a new feature and one that I think a lot of RTS games in the future should adopt. It's effective.

Dave: Having three camera angles open and flicking between them all does work really well.

Martin: The gameplay

offers some interesting tactical possibilities as well – building bridges over lakes, tunnelling underground and so on.

Prezzer: I've never heard of building bridges in an RTS before.

Keith: I thought the underground thing was shit. I thought it was pretty bad on that other underground game as well, er, *Metal Fatigue*.

Dave: Sshhh.

Martin: I like it. It adds an extra dimension to the gameplay. Too many RTS games just let you barricade yourself in places, like across a lake or something, where no one can get to you. If you can build a bridge across or tunnel your way in then it means you can't hide anywhere.

Keith: It didn't need that 'tunnel area' though. In something like *Tib Sun* you've got those little burrowing things that just go underground and pop up where you want them to. That's it. Fine. No messing about.

Richie: Yeah, but this way you can build a tunnel and have tons of tanks going underground and completely outflank the enemy.

Prezzer: It looks better. Graphically speaking.

Keith: I think it just detracts from the smoothness of the gameplay. It's just not free-flowing enough.

Prezzer: You started by saying it was crap, Richie. Now you seem to be defending it.

Richie: I didn't say it was crap. I said it had nice ideas. Things like the multiple camera angles, the way you can change the interface to suit you.

Keith: I do like the changing weather and the way it cycles between night and day.

Prezzer: But does that sort of thing actually have any effect on the gameplay or is it all just graphical frippery?

Keith: Oh yeah! Like if you have solar-powered units then they don't get any at night.



Dave: Poor buggers.

Richie: What I didn't like about that though was that day and night passed by so quickly. It would change every minute.

Keith: You could slow it right down, though.

Richie: Yeah, but you'd have to slow down the whole game, not just the day/night cycle.

Prezzer: It sounds like one of those ideas that sounded great on paper – "Yeah! Solar-powered units that don't work at night!" – but that didn't work in practice so the day/night speed had to be changed to keep them in.

Dave: There is a good aspect to the night time sequences in this game, though. In something like *Tib Sun*, you'd have night-time missions but you could still see everything around you as if it were daylight. You could tell it was dark but it didn't make any difference.

Prezzer: It was just a palette change in other words.

Dave: Basically, yeah. In *Earth 2150* though, when it's dark you can't see the enemy approaching so easily. So launching night-time assaults adds a new level of strategy to the game.

Prezzer: Despite all that, it doesn't really feel, to me anyway, that it does much more than any other strategy game out

"It's a typically German game. Everything there does the job. It doesn't break the mould"

RICHIE SHOEMAKER ON *EARTH 2150*

there. Is it pushing the limits of the genre at all?

Keith: When you get down to it, it's just another real-time strategy game on a future planet.

Something like *Shogun*, however, has completely broken free from that clichéd mould.

Richie: There is one particularly nice thing about *Earth 2150*. Although I didn't get too deep into the campaign, you start off with this base and then the storyline branches out in a non-linear fashion from there.

Keith: It's still basically the same old thing though, isn't it?

Richie: I suppose, yeah. One or two races, the same kind of units, it even has a typically shitty sci-fi story.

Prezzer: Same old names, same old pack drill.

Richie: It's a typically German game, basically. Everything there does the job. It doesn't break the mould. It's just full of little features that some people will like and other people won't.

Keith: It's very clinical. There's no real feeling of originality.

Prezzer: You're just playing on German stereotypes now, aren't you?

Richie: Vorsprung durch technik.

Martin: I found it a bit hard to control the airborne units as well. It was easy to lose track of them.

Prezzer: Isn't that a general failing of all RTS games though? *Force Commander* was particularly bad.

Richie: The air units in *Ground Control* were very nicely handled.

Martin: Yeah. In this game the camera angle just wouldn't pan enough and half the time you'd completely forget that you had air units at all.

Prezzer: That's sort of the problem I had with *Ground Control* though. They never stopped moving and I couldn't seem to catch them with my mouse to take control of them.

Dave: You obviously kept forgetting about the unit controls at the bottom of the screen.

Prezzer: No one's perfect.

Keith: I couldn't control *any* of them in *Homeworld*.

Richie: That's because you're an old duffer, aren't you?

Keith: My simple brain...

Prezzer: Yes, *Homeworld* is only for intelligent people.

Keith: Spods. Geeks. Nerds.

Richie: One other thing I didn't like about it was that there were no infantry units. It was all robots and tanks and mechs and helicopters and so on. No infantry. I really loved the infantry units in *Ground Control*.

Dave: Being a German game though, if they'd had infantry they'd have to have had green blood wouldn't they?

Richie: That answers that one



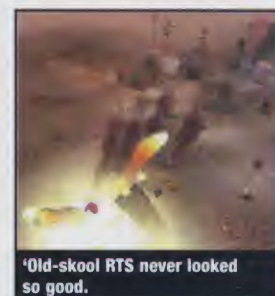
EARTH 2150

Blessed with a bagful of nice touches and tons of smart ideas, this is still perhaps the most 'old-skool' of all the titles here. It's definitely worth a look if you don't want to throw the past away entirely, and the underground sections do add a bizarre sort of Womble-factor to the proceedings.

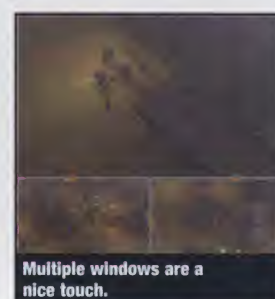
Score	86% PCZ #90
Developer	Topware Interactive
Publisher	Mattel Interactive
Price	£29.99



Nice graphical touches help liven things up.



'Old-skool' RTS never looked so good.



Multiple windows are a nice touch.

FORCE COMMANDER

Sadly the *Star Wars* name isn't enough to save *Force Commander's* graces. While there is some small measure of fun to be had ordering a rank of massive AT-ATs to step on Mark Hamill's head, the awkward camera controls are just too damaging. LucasArts' steady decline continues.

Score	81% PCZ #89
Developer	LucasArts
Publisher	Activision
Price	£34.99

then. No blood in strategy games. Except *Sudden Strike*, which is full of it.

Prezzer: So, nothing particularly new or unique about *Earth 2150* then? Just a solid, professional game, nestling comfortably in the established genre boundaries.

Keith: There's the multiple window thing. I've not seen that before.

Martin: There are rear-view mirrors in driving games.

Prezzer: There was that weird Eidos game. What was it called? A bit like *War Of The Worlds*.

Richie: *WarGames*?

Prezzer: No, it was one that had strange three-eyed aliens attacking Earth and you could play from either side.

Martin: That narrows it down to about 300 games.

Prezzer: *Conquest Earth*! That was it. That had multiple windows in it back in 1997.

Richie: Anyway, there's also the campaign structure. That's fairly unique. And the customisable interface.

Keith: *Academy*, the sequel to *Tau Ceti*, did that back on the Spectrum. You could move all the bits of the screen about.

Richie: Oh yeah!

Prezzer: See, there's nothing original in this industry any more. Anyway, I thought games like *Homeworld* and *Shogun* had started eliminating the interface entirely?

Richie: Yeah, but then you have to spend ages 'learning' how to play the game. I couldn't even begin to play *Homeworld* until I'd gone through the tutorial. It's a lot of effort just to be able to play a new game.



The AT-ATs are satisfyingly powerful units.

Martin: Speaking of which, *Earth 2150* does have a fantastic

tutorial. It really teaches you about every little thing there is. By the time you finish it, you're not left in any doubt what to do. There's nothing worse than playing an RTS and not knowing what the fuck you're doing. (Looks at Prezzer) Such as *Homeworld*.

Prezzer: Look, I didn't make the sodding game you know. I just quite like it that's all.

FORCE COMMANDER

Martin: Oh my God!

Prezzer: Now hang on. I was playing this at the weekend and it wasn't that bad.

Keith: Why?

Prezzer: I dunno. It just sort of grew on me.

Keith: Like a huge cyst.

Richie: I couldn't get close to the point where I could come to like it.

Martin: I was forced to play it all the way through for the walkthrough.

Keith: I was lucky. I was going to do the walkthrough but it refused to work on my machine. I tried everything but I just couldn't get it to work.

Martin: You lucky, lucky man.

Richie: The thing is, because it's *Star Wars*, you always have such high expectations. Even when you hear bad things about it you think, "Oh it's *Star Wars*. It's gotta be good". But right from the start it was atrocious. I mean, the music. *The Death March* is supposed to stir the blood.

Martin: This was like Metallica.

Prezzer: I had it more as 'Moby does *Star Wars*'.

Richie: That just really pissed me off. The tutorial was also atrocious, the graphics...

Martin: What the hell was that all about? LucasArts is renowned for doing great graphics.

Richie: It wasn't done by them, though. It was made by the people who did *Armour Command*. What I did like about it was the storyline and the fact that you switch sides half way through. That surprised me.

Prezzer: Actually, there's a big giveaway if you go into the single-player menu when you first start and select 'Load Scenario'. It suddenly plays a piece of FMV from half way through the game that gives away the plot twist.

Keith: See, that sort of thing shows a lack of polish.

Martin: What about the camera angles? Could anyone get the hang of them? They were all over the place and really jerky.

Richie: You need to learn so many different controls. It almost took up the whole keyboard.

Dave: It's just not enjoyable. You



spend the whole time battling against the game.

Richie: I think what they were trying to do was, rather than give you an overall picture of all the units, to get you right in the action. To make you feel for the characters in some way. But it was too busy and you end up playing half the game from a top-down, zoomed-out view anyway.

The place holders break up the atmosphere.



Close-up things don't look so good.



series with *Monkey Island 3* they messed it up.

Prezzer:

Thing is, it did have a good *Star Wars* feel to it. Like when I was attacking Hoth with a load of AT-AT walkers, blasting away at the Rebel's shield generators while a load of the two-legged ones went storming in. I was sitting there thinking, "Wow, this is great".

All: (Silence)

Prezzer: Obviously I'm alone in this.

All: (Silence)

Keith: It didn't stir me at all.

“I couldn't get the hang of the camera angles. They were all over the place and really jerky”

MARTIN KORDA ON
FORCE COMMANDER

Richie: It just felt like a half-arsed *Star Wars* game to me. It was like they were saying, "Here's a real-time strategy game. If we put *Star Wars* on it people will buy it." Which seems to be the thinking behind all of LucasArts' *Star Wars* games at the moment.

Prezzer: I was banging on about that last time. LucasArts hasn't really been any good since the *Sam & Max* era. Even when they tried to resurrect a quality

Richie: I think that *Obi-Wan* might be good.

Prezzer: You've got to hope so, because *Episode One* has killed LucasArts' reputation frankly. The last decent game they had was *X-Wing Alliance* and even that wasn't in-house.

Keith: *Indy! Indy! Indy! Indy!* (Argument about LucasArts continues for about ten minutes.)

Prezzer: Anyway, *Force Commander*. One thing I didn't like was that, whenever you see the Empire attacking a planet in the films, they always come down with tons and tons of hardware. Here you keep having to start off with about three Stormtroopers and a speeder bike. The Empire seems to have gotten a bit lean these days.

Keith: I found that I kept losing units without realising it. It was hard to keep track of what was happening to who.

Martin: One good thing was the way you could ambush units by using the terrain. The way Imperial forces would be attacked by Rebels running out of the hills.

Dave: Yeah, the terrain elevation was nice. The way you could use



GROUND CONTROL

Hoo-eee Bubba! Setting new standards is always a good thing and *Ground Control* does just that. What *Homeworld* did for space strategy, *GC* does for ground warfare. Stunning visuals also help to create an atmosphere second to none. Just buy it, that's all we've got to say on the matter.

Score	87% PCZ #92
Developer	Massive Entertainment
Publisher	Sierra
Price	£39.99



An atmosphere second to none.

height to your advantage and the realistic line of sight levels. **Richie:** If you have the camera angles set correctly there's a nice sense of scale. Nothing amazing, but you can get huge AT-ATs with little Stormtroopers running about underneath them. That's done quite well. That and the fact that it has all the characters from *Star Wars*, and the way it threads through the first three films is a very nice touch. **Dave:** So basically, what we're saying is that it's a pretty shitty game that's saved slightly by the fact that there are some sad bastards who'll buy anything that's connected with *Star Wars* and pretend to like it even though it's rubbish. Can I go home now? **Richie:** They should really have spent more time figuring out the 3D properly. I know it was really behind schedule, but they should have given it a few more months to really optimise it. **Prezzer:** It certainly doesn't feel very polished. Not like the LucasArts of old at all. **Martin:** It was also another game that relies on using the same tactics to win over and over again. Basically, you take out the infantry turrets from afar. Then you run in with troopers and take out the vehicle turrets. Then you send in your bombers and blow the shit out of everything. You can complete eight out of ten missions just by doing that each time. It just gets really boring. **Richie:** I'd describe it as the *Daikatana* of strategy games.

(Cries of 'Ooh!' and 'Get her!')

GROUND CONTROL

Prezzer: Why is this game so damn good? **Keith:** It's made a stand. Firstly, it's by a bunch of developers who have never made anything before in their lives. They've come out of university, they've taken a look at the strategy game market and thought, "Right, we can change this. We *will* change this. What don't we need in real-time strategy? Resource management? Don't need it, forget it. What's the point of it? Everybody does it and it's boring." They cut straight to the point. You land on a planet and you've got some units that you have to learn to love. Each unit that survives gets taken through to the next mission. They gain in experience, they get medals, they get promoted. You learn to appreciate exactly what units you have. Not like in other games where they're just disposable. **Prezzer:** Plus you can rename them. Give them the names of friends or colleagues or daytime soap opera characters. Charging into battle with the cast of *Emmerdale* is a laugh. **Keith:** Every single unit is valuable. Plus they all have a specific role – infantry, artillery, tanks, everything – all with a strategic role to play and, if you lose any of them, you're in the shit. You feel as though you're there and that the whole world is crumbling around you. It creates

an atmosphere that is extremely important in this genre.

Prezzer: Yes, but to counter that argument... it's full of women.

Richie: (Sharp intake of breath) Controversial!

Prezzer: I'm playing a woman commander being ordered by a woman general. What do women know about fighting?

All: Woah!

Dave: You can deal with the letters for that one. And I know a few women who could eat you for dinner and then force you to apologise about the bad taste in their mouths afterwards.

Prezzer: Seriously though, it is absorbing. I love the fact the storyline is continually progressing while you play each mission.



Keith: It is very cinematic in some ways. They've put a lot of effort into making the plot something you can enjoy watching, something you can really get into. **Richie:** Sometimes a game can feel quite empty when you take a large chunk of it out. Resource management has grown to be quite central to the genre. When you remove it, you need something there to fill the void. They tried this with *Dogs Of War* by letting you control units in

third-person. It's not a bad idea, but it was very poorly executed.

Keith: Just because *Ground Control* doesn't have resource management doesn't mean that there aren't tactical variations to the gameplay. The enemy AI forces you to think about how best to use your units and the friendly AI units really add another dimension to it. You're always thinking throughout the game.

Prezzer: But why can't you have that level of tactical AI and resource management options in a game? With RM-based games, combat always seems to come down to wars of attrition.

"It is very cinematic in some ways. They've put effort into making the plot something you enjoy watching"

KEITH PULLIN ON *GROUND CONTROL*

Richie: Well, they have to take into account the branching campaign and the continuing storyline.

Dave: One problem with all RTS games that rely on resource management is that if you cut off the enemy's supply lines – like harvesters and so on – it's usually too easy to then build up a massive force of your own and just rush in and overwhelm your opponent. Moving away from resource management is a good thing in that sense.

Prezzer: No one ever seems to treat supply lines with the



Aerial battles are a joy to behold.

importance they deserve in these games either. Normally you just build a few harvesters and then send them off by themselves and leave them to it. No one really thinks about how important those kind of elements are.

Keith: That's why it's better if something on the outside is doing all that for you. You don't need to worry about it and can concentrate on the actual battles instead.

Prezzer: I like the fact you're introduced to the impressive strategic elements right from the start. When you have to provide support to the other friendly units attacking an enemy installation. It lets you know right from the start that this is different. Especially when he starts sending you radio messages asking where the hell you are and how they're all dying due to your incompetence.

Richie: There's another thing though. Something that nearly all strategy games are guilty of. I like to feel totally involved in a game, as though I'm a part of it rather than making it obvious that I'm just playing a game. *Force Commander* was really bad with those large boxes it puts around your units when you select them, whereas *Shogun* was superb with

just those bouncing flags. *Ground Control* has those weird little triangles though. Even though the interface doesn't really get in the way, those triangles still break up the atmosphere.

Prezzer: Maybe that's a good thing though. Kids are already killing each other in real-life after thinking they're playing *Quake*.

Martin: The thing *Ground Control* has over every other game, including *Shogun*, is that, when you zoom into a battle, you really, really feel as though it's a real battle going on around you. The bullets zip by you, the sound is fantastic, the effects are superb.

Dave: It really creates a believable atmosphere.

Richie: What did you think of the music by the way?

Prezzer: Stirring.

Martin: With *Shogun* you're a little bit too far away from the characters. But here you can go right down to the front, see them firing at each other, see the bullets flying past and so on.

Keith: Also, when you're down there, if you tilt the camera up you can see the jets flying past overhead, dropping their bombs, the explosions going off all around you. It's like you're a soldier actually standing on the battlefield.

Martin: The aerial battles are superb as well. For me this is the first strategy game that's got aerial battles right... or as close to right as you're going to get. They actually fly right. They do basic manoeuvres and everything. You just sit there watching it, amazed.

Prezzer: The tension is added to by the fact that 'you' are actually there in the battle, in that APC thing. If that blows up, then your character dies.

Richie: That's another thing they've got right. That's how you drag someone in. Like *Total Annihilation* where you have to make sure your commander stays alive. You are there. You are part of the battle rather than directing it from above like an idiot.

Prezzer: You mentioned the infantry units before. What's so good about them?

Richie: Ah!

Martin: Finally we have an RTS game where commandos with little guns can't just blow up a tank by firing randomly at it for a short while. If you've got a little pissy machine gun, you're not going to be able to blow it up from the front are you? You have to flank it. Get behind it.

Prezzer: Yeah, that's a nice touch, the way they swarm around a unit as a group. Also, just the fact that infantry units are designated by group as opposed to individual soldiers. That just makes so much more sense.

Dave: One thing that disappointed me about the infantry was that you couldn't 'dig in', build foxholes that you can take cover in. Although that's probably more of a problem with the current level of computer technology we're limited to. I'd like to have blown up some trees as well.

Richie: You're a real environmentalist, aren't you?

Keith: They used light and dark to good advantage though. If you hide units in

shadows, you get a real advantage. Not many RTS games do that. You can hide in a shadow and wait for a convoy to innocently come past then blow the crap out of it. It's a good feeling when you're there as well, just waiting.

Prezzer: You're starting to scare me now.

Keith: It's exciting.

Prezzer: Are we sure that this isn't all freshness masquerading as decent gameplay though? When *Homeworld* first came out, a lot was made of the atmosphere and presentation. But when it gets criticised nowadays it's almost always hailed a case of style over substance.

Martin: People probably only criticise it because they haven't played it enough.

Richie: People will have seen the fabulous screenshots and thought, "Here we go, style over gameplay," without actually playing the game.

Prezzer: So how do we convince those same people that *Ground Control* is more than that?

Dave: Get them to play it!

Martin: How do you sell *Unreal Tournament* to people that aren't used to first-person shooters? Until you sit down and play it you can't comprehend how brilliant and fun it is, how immersive it is. If a game is inherently fun, you can't diminish it by saying, "Oh, it's just fancy graphics."

Dave: A game either sucks you in or it doesn't. *Ground Control* is one game that really does. *Counter Strike* is another, but that's a completely different story. Next month's story in fact.

Prezzer: I'm not so sure it'll be

able to draw in anything but the hardcore strategy fan though. At face value it looks far too confusing. That might be off-putting for some.

Martin: Hopefully, people will read what we're saying and give it a try.

Dave: I doubt anyone's still reading at this point.

HOMEWORLD

Prezzer: Never heard of it.

Martin: It's ahead of its time.

Richie: When you look at other space-based strategy games that are on the way, the only one that looks likely to beat *Homeworld* is its spin-off, *Cataclysm*.

Prezzer: It's still one of the only games in existence that uses 3D to its fullest effect.

Richie: Even the forthcoming games like *Star Trek New Worlds*, *Starfleet Command 2*, *The Rift* and *Conquest* from Digital Anvil are still using the



an unofficial horizon, so it's not true 3D in the most realistic sense, but it's as close as we're ever likely to get short of being there for real.

Richie: You hardly ever get attacked from above or below, usually just from the sides.

You never get ships attacking upside down either. That would have been completely confusing though.

Prezzer: I still can't understand that particular piece of criticism. I got the hang of the controls and interface within about five minutes. The tutorial was superb.

Richie: So did I, but some people don't bother with the tutorial.

Prezzer: Well, they've only themselves to blame then.

Keith: I played the tutorial and still found it really complicated.

Dave: Steve Hill's often made the point that some people are better suited to thinking in three dimensions than others and that's

"It's not 3D in the most realistic sense, but it's as close as we're likely to get short of being there for real"

PREZZER ON HOMEWORLD

why a lot of gamers just can't get their heads around it at all.

Prezzer: Bah. I've got no patience for these people.

Richie: The control system was the biggest thing people had against it. It's one of those things you either love or hate.

Dave: I hate.



HOMEWORLD

OK, it does look daunting at first. But it's really, really easy to get to grips with. Honest. Almost a year old and still ahead of its time, *Homeworld* remains one of the most original strategy titles that we've ever seen. You can even download mods to change it into *Battlestar Galactica* if you like.

Score	85% PCZ #82
Developer	Relic Entertainment
Publisher	Sierra
Price	£34.99



Effective strategies are all important.



Space. Redder than I was expecting.



One of the few games to use 3D to its fullest.



Big old ships.

THE GODS OF WAR

"They're coming this way, sarge! And they're heavily armed!"

The wars of tomorrow are busily being created even as you read these words that have been typed by my hands on this keyboard with which I write. *Homeworld* is to spawn a sequel/spin-off/cash-in (no one knows what to call it) in the shape of *Cataclysm*. *Sudden Strike* has been delayed and delayed, to the point that no one's quite sure if it even exists any more. *Sacrifice*

sees Shiny Entertainment offer their 'unique' (ie weird) perspective on the genre.

Of course, the big one is *Red Alert 2*, although given how ordinary *Tiberian Sun* was, you'll forgive us for being wary. *Praetorians*, from the team behind *Commandos*, continues *Shogun's* journey into history, based in the heyday of the Roman Empire. Think *Age Of Empires* in 3D.



Cataclysm looks to further the excellent series.



Sacrifice promises Shiny's 'humorous' approach.

THE COGS OF WAR

"They may be green recruits, but they're *our* green recruits!"

There was a run of real-time strategy titles over the past year or so – all of them practically identical. *Tiberian Sun*, *Warzone 2100*, *WarGames*, *Battlezone 2* (sort of) and a host of others all seemed to think the route to gaming success was to have futuristic tanks shooting each other on some far-off planet. All were clothed in the combat fatigues of averageness.

Fantasy got a look in with *TA: Kingdoms* and *Myth II* – although the former was little more than the original in new clothes, and the latter an excuse to watch exploding dwarves scatter their entrails across a swamp. Up in space we saw *Imperium Galactica 2* and *Star Trek Armada* giving *Homeworld* a run for its money, although neither had what it takes to go the distance.



TA: Kingdoms gives a fantasy slant to the genre.



Armada looks nice enough, but that's it.

THE DOGS OF WAR

"You are the most pathetic bunch of maggots this man's army has ever known!"

You'd think it would be hard to create a bad strategy game. Even a carbon copy of *Command & Conquer's* original breakthrough template would be enough to produce a playable title. Amazingly though, some people still manage to mess up. Soiling the underwear of respectability, we have games like *Dogs Of War*, proof that more control really does equal

less. Or *Armour Command*, real-time strategy's answer to a question no one's asking.

It gets worse. *Metal Fatigue* takes the ingenious route of combining real-time strategy with the only genre less popular than baseball management titles – giant robot games. It's not a terrible game, but there's nothing worth paying for.



Dogs Of War offers control but no fun.



Metal Fatigue. Big robots = big headache.

But I can appreciate what you're saying about the game.

Richie: One other reason I like *Homeworld* is because I like quite slow-paced games, like *X – Beyond The Frontier*, for example. *Homeworld's* missions are long and not much happens for a while. Plus there's that dragging commentary and those pencil-drawn cut scenes.

Prezzer: I like the 'hurry up and wait' attitude though. It's realistic, where space is involved.

Richie: It's a beautiful game to look at. The graphics are absolutely amazing. Like when you play a multiplayer game and you record the battle, just watching it again and again is fantastic. If they'd done *Force Commander* like that it would have been utterly amazing.

Keith: My problem with the battles was that, a lot of the time, you couldn't really tell what was going on. It just got really messy. A load of streaks going everywhere.

which you could tell was taken straight from it.

Richie: It just shows that you can make a strategy game without tanks or infantry that works. I mean, you could do a WWII strategy game based around the Battle Of Britain like this. It would be great.

Keith: I still think the interface is too confusing though. Maybe I am too impatient, which is probably why I prefer *Ground Control*. It's more immediately accessible. *Homeworld* takes too much work to get used to.

Richie: It does have a limited research tree system, the same sort of thing you get in all the other strategy games. That limits things slightly.

Prezzer: It does have a fair old resource management element to it as well. Not to the annoying levels that some of the ground-based games take it though. No bases to build or stuff like that. Just units. And having such limited supplies of resources



"It's like *Ground Control* in that it has that atmosphere that makes you believe you're there"

DAVE WOODS ON *SHOGUN*

adds another strategic level to the game. You have to be careful about which units to build.

Richie: I think it is the benchmark when it comes to space-based strategy games. *Ground Control* has just clipped it overall.

Prezzer: *Ground Control* struck me a little as being *Homeworld* on the surface. The same sense of atmosphere and high levels of presentation. They both have storylines that are played out during the missions and they both immerse you to the same degree.

SHOGUN

Richie: I can't think of a single bad thing to say about *Shogun*.

Dave: Go on. Try. I'll start you off with one otherwise.

Richie: OK, it would be better if you could have full campaigns online. Other than that – fantastic.

Martin: I found the Risk element slightly too simplistic. Like you can pick up a ninja and tell it to assassinate someone and there's just a percentage score which leads to one of two cut scenes. Either he does or he doesn't. There could have been more made of that sort of thing.

Richie: What, like a third-person adventure sort of thing like *Thief*?

Richie: Yeah, but that's just so you know where your ships are headed.

Prezzer: Not enough people explored the multiplayer side of the game. The single-player campaign probably was a bit too short, but the skirmish mode just opens the whole thing up again.

Richie: You can imagine it working really well just as a multiplayer, online game. Or perhaps combining this with *Ground Control*.

Keith: That would be brilliant. An online mixture of *Homeworld* and *Ground Control* with one person doing the resource management and the other controlling the troops. So you'd have one player having to get the units across space to the planet and the other person fighting it out below.

Prezzer: Yeah, but with a *Star Wars* mod so that you were actually flying Star Destroyers and controlling Stormtroopers.

Richie: Versus *Star Trek* units.

Martin: The perfect game!

Keith: There are a lot of *Homeworld* aspects to *Ground Control* actually. The aircraft all had those streaks behind them,

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

A change of pace. Instead of futuristic tanks shooting at futuristic robots on some desolate alien soil, *Shogun* is all about mass warfare in 16th Century Japan. And it is utterly fantastic. Your chance to command massive armies in gaming's answer to the first half hour of *Gladiator*.

Score	93% PCZ #89
Developer	The Creative Assembly
Publisher	EA
Price	£34.99



Now that's a fight.

Historical accuracy helps the atmosphere.



Balancing your forces is vital.

Martin: Well, not that far but they could have put more into it. Did anyone play *Sword Of The Samurai*? It was basically *Shogun* for the 286. You'd build up an army like *Shogun*, but if you wanted to assassinate someone, you'd get to control the ninja.

Richie: Like the Talia missions in *Red Alert* you mean?

Martin: Yeah. *Shogun* should have had that kind of thing. I just found it a bit too simplistic.

Keith: What it's good at though is compartmentalising. The resource management section is separate from the actual war, so that when you start the combat all you have to concentrate on is getting those troops into the right places.

Dave: You're not distracted with a dozen and one administration duties at the same time.

Keith: Everything's separate. You don't have to worry about losing power during a war... which obviously you wouldn't have done in feudal Japan anyway.

Prezzer: Milord, the batteries have gone dead on my spear.

Keith: Anyway, it's almost like two separate games in one. You take care of all the resources, make sure everything's perfect and then bang, you're into the war.

Dave: Nothing can compare with those battles. They're amazing.

Richie: I didn't much rate the castle battles. I understand that they didn't have siege machines in ancient Japan, but just going up those hills and charging through the doors was a pain.

Prezzer: Weren't they all made of paper in Japan though? They should have just got a few

matches and set light to them. It is one of the few games here that does large-scale battles really well though. The scale of the things is stunning. Hundreds of soldiers just piling in. Lovely.



Martin: There's nothing more satisfying than watching your enemy turn and run away in terror.

Dave: It's like *Ground Control* in that it has that atmosphere that

makes you believe you're there. It adds to that by not letting you go all over the battlefield with the camera but only where your troops are. Also little things like how the AI works with the terrain.

"It's like the opening battle in *Gladiator*. You're like 'Steady, wait for it,' as the enemy gets near. It's brilliant tension"

PREZZER ON SHOGUN

Prezzer: The noise of battle too.

Richie: The way the drums come in to boost morale.

Martin: The first sign of the enemy as they emerge from the fog makes you think, "Right, this is it."

Prezzer: It's like the opening battle in *Gladiator*. You're like, "Steady. Wait for it". It's brilliant at building tension.

Richie: You're all "Right lads, set your pikes," and you just wheel the troops around a little bit here and a little bit there. All that last minute fine-tuning before the battle is joined.

Prezzer: It is bordering on being a wargame, not a strategy game in many senses.

Martin: The title says it all: *Total War*. It's fantastic.

Richie: I think it's the best game since *Half-Life*. I'd say it's the best strategy game I've ever played.

Dave: Steady old chap. No point in getting carried away. You'll be saying it's better than sex next. Although you are married now aren't you? [C]

AND THE WINNER IS...

In war there are no winners. In this Supertest, there are two.

It was a toss-up. And before you start conjuring up mental images of five bored *ZONE* staffers trying to pass the time in the only way they know how, let me clarify by saying deciding the winner came down to a choice between the fresh-faced spunkiness (whoops) of *Ground Control* and the historical japey of *Shogun*.

As with all the best games, *Shogun* had us all reliving those classic moments that make gaming worthwhile. Everyone had a war story to tell and we all agreed that for pure fighting it's easily the best. "It's essentially paper, scissors, stone," Martin said, "It's the game I've been waiting for ever since I started playing computer games." The originality just edged it to the top of our list.

Ground Control, while nestling in familiar RTS territory, is the best of its type. It's setting a new benchmark. "A thrilling experience from start to finish," said Keith.

Homeworld, despite its age, was still deemed playable enough to come third. *Earth 2150* may have been a good game once, but it was unfortunate enough to arrive in the wake of *Ground Control*. Simply being efficient is no longer enough to count. Finally, it was pretty much the unanimous view that *Force Commander* is as bad as this sort of thing can get. "Easily the weakest game here," muttered Richie.

OVERALL WINNER



Shogun: Total War - are you going to argue with them?

BUDGET ZONE

With so many games coming on the market for a crisp fiver, there's no reason why you should put up with a substandard product. **Mark Hill** digs through the latest budget releases, rediscovers some classics and has a flying lesson as well

DUKE NUKEM 3D

★ £4.99 • Infogrames Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** Give us a break

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The sprites are the size of boulders and setting it up is a nightmare but, somehow, playing *Duke Nukem* still sends shivers of delight down our spines. As soon as the game started and the Duke drawled his trademark "Let's rock!", the whole office was gathered around the monitor fighting for a go and dripping big

splashes of nostalgia all over the screen. Not only did *Duke Nukem* give the dawning 3D shoot 'em up genre a shot of humour, it had brilliant levels and some of the best gameplay ever. The chauvinism, the lap dancers, the alien pig cops, the tongue-in-cheek machismo and the violence are the trademarks of what is widely regarded as a cult classic. If you don't already own a copy you'd be a buffoon not to snap this up now.

PCZVERDICT

80%



The game that defined "kickin' ass".



Better than *Dalkatana*.

ACTUA GOLF 2

★ £4.99 • Infogrames Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A 3D card recommended

While *Actua Soccer* was always a viable alternative to *FIFA*, the *Golf* series always struggled against the might of *PGA* and *Links*. It might be the cheapest one around now, but it's far from the best. The 3D graphics were good for their time but

suffer from the usual *Actua* propensity to be too polygonal, and the control system lets the gameplay down by proving to be too frustrating. But the overall lack of polish doesn't mean it's terrible. Check it out if you want a golf game but don't want to shell out real money.

PCZVERDICT

61%



At least it's not *Golf Pro*.



The gameplay is very frustrating.



The superb *MiG Alley*.



Yes, it's a plane. So What?

MAXIMUM FLIGHT

★ £34.99 • Empire Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** You'll need a 3D card and more memory for a smooth *MiG Alley*

This flight sim compilation has consistent quality throughout its four titles, but they vary wildly in age. The star, and also the most recent, is undoubtedly *MiG Alley*, a whopper of a jet sim with an emphasis on dogfights and hardcore difficulty. The missions are well structured and the graphics up there with the best. Next in

the pecking order is *Apache Havoc*, which has only recently been debunked as the top chopper sim by *Comanche Hokum*. It's an ageing game but it gives the pack some variety. The other two are also getting on a bit, with *F/A-18 Korea* now completely outdated and the once joyful experience of *Flying Corps Gold* clearly showing its age. This aside, the *Maximum Flight* pack provides a nice introduction to the genre.

PCZVERDICT

70%



Simple, but hellishly addictive.



Once you pop, you just can't stop. Groan.

PUZZLE BOBBLE

★ £4.99 • Infogrames Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** P133 and 16Mb RAM

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

This is one of the best post-*Tetris* puzzle-type games ever made. It's as simple as that. There have been some recent, and unbelievably poor, updates which have been rightly panned in our reviews, but this is the unadulterated original. The premise couldn't be simpler or more Japanese: you control a couple

of cute dinosaurs who shoot bubbles into the ceiling, then when you connect three or more of the same colour they pop, taking any bubbles that are glued beneath with them. Play it against a mate and you'll be screaming like a little kid, as you frantically match each other's moves and shoot delicately placed tactical bubbles into their side of the screen. An absolute must have.

PCZVERDICT

84%

IMPERIUM GALACTICA

★ £4.99 • Infogrames Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

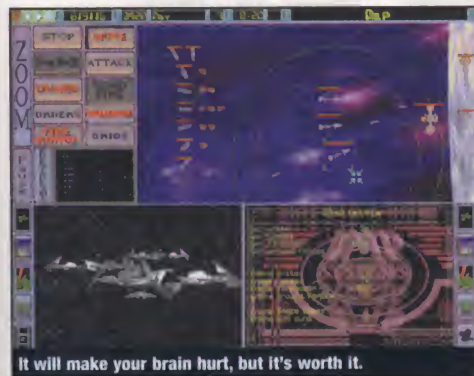
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486 Memory 8 Mb RAM **WE SAY** P100 with 16Mb RAM

**PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

A masterful, sophisticated strategy game, *Imperium Galactica* had groups of obsessive fans drooling over it in the office about three years ago, while others shrugged their shoulders and wondered what all the fuss was about. The fuss is actually about the fabulous blend of turn-based and real-time strategy, combining the macro-management of *Master Of Orion* with the faster paced C&C-style battles. The epic story adds another layer to what is essential sci-fi for thinkers.

PCZVERDICT

80%



It will make your brain hurt, but it's worth it.



Have a quick skirmish, you won't regret it.

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

★ £4.99 • Infogrames Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** P133 with 32Mb RAM

**PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

We still rate this as one of the all-time great RTSs, and a quick revisit has done nothing to blunt that feeling. The single-player campaign is still only a side dish to the main course of lone skirmishes, seasoned with an incredibly large number of units (even larger if you download the thousands available on the Web – watch out for the *Star Wars* mod). There's no denying that it has dated, especially on the graphics front, and you'll probably miss the lack of vocal unit response we've all got used to, but there's still enough here to make it an essential item in your collection. In these days of complex 3D strategy titles, *Total Annihilation* stands out as a bastion of simpler, purer times.

PCZVERDICT

82%



Slap, bang, wallop, snore.

CARMAGEDDON

★ £4.99 • Infogrames Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P75 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A Pentium 133

One of the most controversial computer games ever made, *Carmageddon*'s main contribution to the racing genre was letting you run over pedestrians in a gleeful shower of gore. There's also some vague goal of winning a race and going around the right checkpoints, but that is purely secondary to seeing your windscreen wipers scratch streaks of red on the window. The sequels have been forced to use green-blooded zombies, which sort of misses the point. Unless you own a very old machine there's very little reason for playing this now.

PCZVERDICT

62%

DARK VENGEANCE

★ £4.99 • Infogrames Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 166 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 32Mb RAM and a 3D card

A third-person dungeon 'em up, *Dark Vengeance* has more than a touch of *Heretic* and a hint of *Tomb Raider*. There are three characters to choose from, the Warlock, the Trickster and the brainless piece of meat that is the Gladiator. Although the graphics and the method of attack may change (from a crooked magical staff to a big bastard axe), the gameplay remains basically the same: kill squawking goblins, pick up keys and open doors. The control system is pretty substandard and the sounds are absolutely awful. Is it any surprise you've never heard of it?

PCZVERDICT

50%



Seatbelt on?

ABE'S EXODDUS

★ £4.99 • Infogrames Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 166 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** P200 with 32Mb RAM

It doesn't seem that long ago since old Abe led his Exoddus for a whole tenner, but we're not complaining, and you shouldn't either. You should know the score by now: old-style platform game with some innovative puzzles and the introduction of Abe's strange language, which enables him to tell others of his race what to do as he helps them to escape and open magical portals. And we haven't even mentioned the farting. If you ever feel nostalgic about 2D platformers you could do a lot worse.

PCZVERDICT

71%



Look out for a 3D Abe soon.



Your name isn't Neville, is it?

ACTUA SOCCER 3

★ £4.99 • Infogrames Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** P200 with 32Mb RAM

There was a time when *FIFA* wasn't the lone ruler of the football market and the *Actua* series had more than its fair share of fans. Featuring faster gameplay and spectacular goals from half way across the field, it also has some of the best commentary. At the height of its popularity *Actua Soccer 3* was a huge online game, but you'd be hard-pressed to find someone playing it now. Never mind, invite a couple of friends over and try to forget that England are rubbish.

PCZVERDICT

73%

HARDWARE

It's 3dfx against NVIDIA in the graphics card war...

★ WORDS Benny Har-Even

3DFX Voodoo5 5000 VS NVIDIA GeForce2 GTS

★ 3dfx Voodoo5 5000 • £212 (£250, inc VAT) • www.3dfx.com

★ Hercules 3D Prophet II GTS • £222 (£260, inc VAT) • www.guillemot.com/uk

The wait is over. After more than six months delay 3dfx has finally released the follow up cards to the Voodoo3 series in the shape of the Voodoo4 and Voodoo5. This lets us put it head to head against NVIDIA's latest beast, the GeForce2 GTS.

Once upon a time (1997 to be exact) if you were serious about gaming, 3dfx was the only choice for a PC accelerator. The first Voodoo card was an add-in card that made games like *Quake* run smoothly and with arcade quality graphics. Voodoo2 did the same, only much faster. However, by the time Voodoo3 arrived, 3dfx's competitors had begun to play catch up. By then NVIDIA's TNT2 chip offered a similar level of performance as well as features such as 32-bit colour rendering, something Voodoo3 could not do. Then last Christmas, NVIDIA unleashed GeForce 256, featuring unprecedented performance. This was the first chip to feature an

integrated Transform and Lighting (T&L) engine, off-loading calculations from the CPU, allowing it concentrate on AI and physics modelling rather than just looking good. Meanwhile, 3dfx had, well, Voodoo3, by then outdated and out of the running.

anti-aliasing (FSAA). This is the removal of 'jaggies' from games, the stair-like affect that plagues all non anti-aliased games. As this is purely driver dependant, it will offer visual improvement on any game, new or old. The main downside is that anti-aliasing

opposed to just smaller. Motion Blur is self explanatory, and is further designed to add realism. Soft shadows and reflections are also possible. Unfortunately, these features require games to be coded specifically for them and, as yet, none have been announced. However, 3dfx is talking to Microsoft to promote their inclusion in DirectX 8. The new Voodoo's now support 32-bit colour rendering and DirectX texture compression, though 3dfx also offers its own FXT-1 compression algorithms instead. The VSA-100 chip runs at 166MHz which, along with two texture pipelines, produces a fill-rate figure of 333 Megapixels per second. The Voodoo5 does not have hardware T&L.

The entry-level Voodoo4 4500 will indeed be a single chip solution. The Voodoo5 5000 and 5500 both use two VSA-100 chips, the former with 32Mb of memory and the latter with 64Mb with a fill-rate of 667 Megapixels per

second. The big daddy will be the Voodoo5 6000 with four (!) chips and 128Mb of memory. Currently only the 64Mb 5500 is shipping and this is what we tested.

The GeForce2 GTS is the successor to the all-conquering GeForce 256 chipset and, as such, its core feature set is familiar. The improvements are mainly due to the move from a 0.25 Micron process to 0.18, thus allowing a clock speed increase from 120MHz up 200MHz. The newest feature that NVIDIA is touting for GeForce2 GTS is it's NVIDIA Shading Rasteriser (NSR). This basically means that the card can perform seven effects to a pixel in one pass, thus making scenes look more realistic without the need for adding fill-rate sapping geometry. This creates a textured pixel or texel, two of which can be produced by each of the four pipelines in each clock. This results in a MegaTexel fill rate of 1.6 GigaTexels and hence the name GigaTexel Shader (GTS). Additionally the DDR memory speed has increased to 166MHz, equivalent to 333MHz conventional memory increasing the internal bandwidth to 5.3Gb per second. NVIDIA has also recently added support for FSAA to its drivers set, a clear attempt at trying to steal the thunder from 3dfx's Voodoo cards. 3dfx use jittered samples of multiple images stored in the T-Buffer. NVIDIA use 'supersampling', that is rendering internally at a much higher resolution and resampling down. In both cases the performance hit is similarly heavy.

"If you're lucky enough to be given a Voodoo5, then you certainly won't be disappointed, and if you want the best images, then it's the card to go for"

At last though, the new Voodoo is here. All the boards are based on the VSA-100 chip. VSA stands for Voodoo Scalable Architecture; as more chips means a greater fill-rate.

Its primary feature is called the T-Buffer. This stores multiple copies of a rendered scene, which can then be manipulated to create a number of image-enhancing effects. The most heavily promoted of these is full-scene

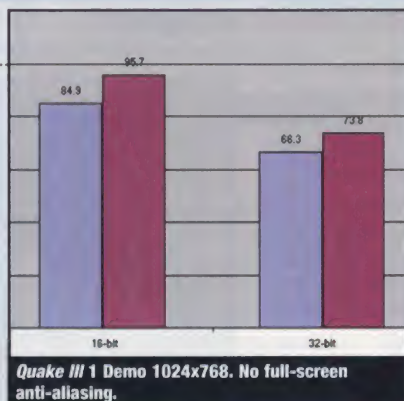
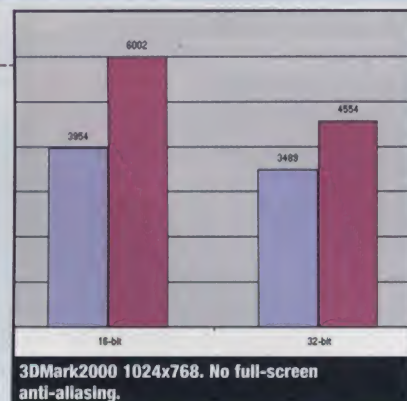
requires a great deal of horsepower, hence 3dfx's need for a scalable architecture. 3dfx offers two levels in its driver. Two samples (2xAA) are taken for medium quality or four samples (4xAA), for the highest quality.

The T-Buffer also allows for other effects. Depth of Field will offer more realistic perspective in a scene with objects that are more distant, looking less distinct than those in the foreground, as

BENCHMARKS

We tested both of the cards with a wide range of games. Here are two of the scores, from *Quake III* and the superb benchmarking utility 3DMark2000.

3dfx Voodoo5 5000
NVIDIA GeForce2 GTS



The first GeForce2 card we got our hands on from Hercules featured a cool blue PCB and 32Mb of seemingly armour-plated RAM it certainly looked like it was ready to do battle with the Voodoo5. That card looms large due to its two chips and, if you have a small case, you might not even be able to find room for it. It's the first graphics card to require a power connector to be plugged into it, just like any internal PC peripheral, and pass through connectors are supplied.

We tested both machines on an 800MHz Pentium III machine supplied by Panrix with all benchmarks run conducted at

1024x768. The motherboard used an Apollo Pro 133A chipset to provide support for PC133 SDRAM and AGP4X. We ran all tests in 16 and 32-bit colour and at each level of anti-aliasing to determine each cards ability to produce high scores at different levels of image quality.

Our first was 3DMark2000 from Mad Onion.com. This runs a range of tests under DirectX 7 to produce an overall score. At this test with FSAA off, the GeForce2 GTS got off to a storming start leading the Voodoo5 by a sizeable margin. However, direct comparisons are difficult once we start taking anti-aliasing into

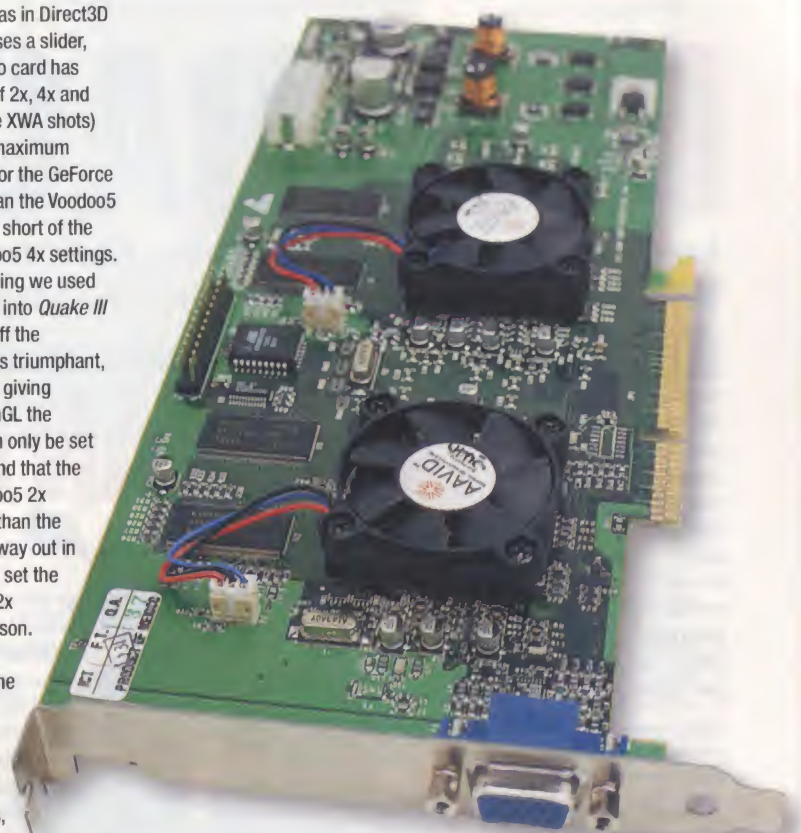
account especially as in Direct3D the NVIDIA driver uses a slider, whereas the Voodoo card has the three settings of 2x, 4x and off. In our tests (see XWA shots) we found that the maximum Direct 3D settings for the GeForce2 GTS were better than the Voodoo5 2X settings, but fell short of the quality of the Voodoo5 4x settings.

For OpenGL testing we used the first Demo built into *Quake III Arena*. With FSAA off the GeForce2 again was triumphant, with its T&L engine giving assistance. In OpenGL the GeForce2 FSAA can only be set to on or off. We found that the quality of the Voodoo5 2x setting was better than the GeForce2, with 4x way out in front. Therefore we set the Voodoo card to its 2x setting for comparison.

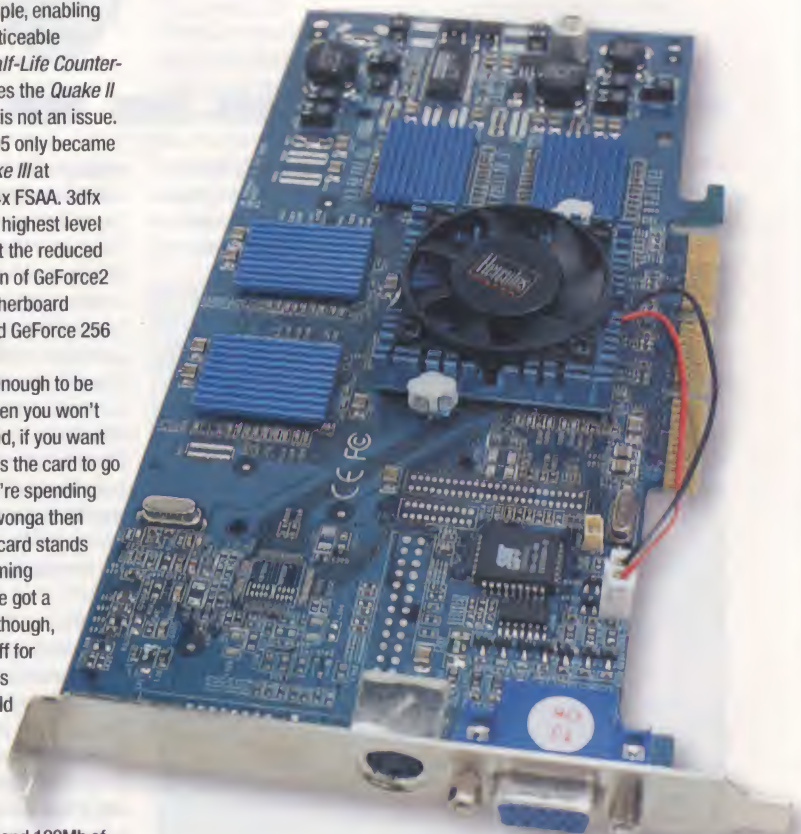
The graphs demonstrate that the GeForce2 GTS emerges as the pure performance leader, offering enormous fill-rates, FSAA and T&L, with more games supporting the latter in the offering. Its method of full-scene anti-aliasing may be less impressive than the Voodoo5 but it does work and is there if required. For example, enabling FSAA brought a noticeable improvement to *Half-Life Counter-Strike* and, as it uses the *Quake II* engine, frame rate is not an issue. Equally the Voodoo5 only became unplayable in *Quake III* at 1024x768 only at 4x FSAA. 3dfx does still bring the highest level of compatibility but the reduced power consumption of GeForce2 mean that the motherboard issues that plagued GeForce 256 shouldn't reoccur.

If you're lucky enough to be given a Voodoo5 then you won't be disappointed and, if you want the best images, it's the card to go for. However, if you're spending your hard earned wonga then the GeForce2 GTS card stands as the ultimate gaming peripheral. If you've got a GeForce 256 card though, its worth holding off for the next one, unless you can sell your old card first.

The Voodoo5 6000 may put 3dfx back in the frame, but with four chips and 128Mb of RAM it's unlikely to be an economical solution. Clearly 3dfx's next chip codenamed 'Rampage' will have to be really special to put the company back on the map. [X]



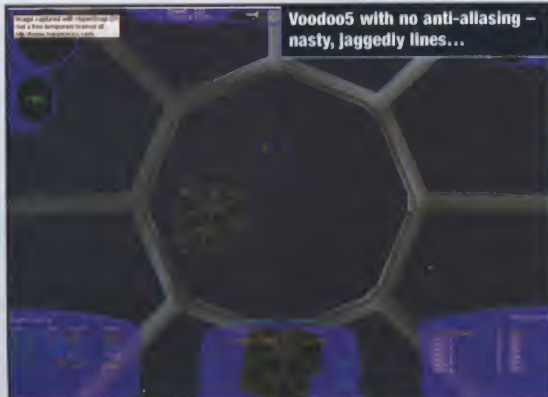
① 3dfx Voodoo5 5000: excellent image quality and guaranteed compatibility.



② NVIDIA GeForce2 GTS: for pure performance this card can't be beaten.

WE'RE NOT ANTI-EVERYTHING

Anti-aliasing means the end of jaggies in games. Hooray. Both of these cards feature it and, as you can see, it looks absolutely spiffing.



Voodoo5 with no anti-aliasing - nasty, jaggedly lines...



... become smooth, lovely lines at the maximum 4X setting. Oil of Olaf eat your heart out.



Look we can do it too. Anti-aliasing on GeForce2 GTS at maximum settings.

FEEDBACK

Some of you went out and bought *Daikatana*, others tried the demo and didn't bother. All of you hated it. Mark Hill finds out what else you've got to say this month



IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC ZONE* over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

WE WANT YOUR REVIEWS WIN A SUPER SCOOTER!



That's right. We have five trendy new scooters to give away (each worth £1,500), and we're giving you the chance to get a review published in *PC ZONE*.

Just send your usual Feedback comments, along with a 300 word review of the game you're commenting on (clearly marked 'review'), to the following email address: editor@pczone.co.uk. We'll pick the best review, publish it and send a scooter to the winner. All the usual competition rules apply, and you must be over 18 to qualify for entry. Any winning review must be of sufficient quality to be printed and the prize carries over to the next month if there is no winner.

DAIKATANA

REVIEWED #91, *PCZ* July
SCORE 53%

What we thought

"We've given it a fair go and the game just doesn't cut it. In our opinion it's no better than *Quake* or *SIN*, and it's streets and streets behind *Half-Life*, or even *Soldier Of Fortune*."

What you said

★ "I played your demo of *Daikatana* and, to be perfectly

honest, it's the worst 3D shooter I have ever played... ever. The AI is awful, as the monsters seem to appear from nowhere and relentlessly attack you. The architecture and level design are just completely dreadful – on occasion, I even got stuck down corridors. The sounds are annoying (especially that annoying dragonfly thing). The display is over-cluttered, and would be better with the *Half-Life*

weapon management system, rather than the annoying bar on the right of the screen. Even *Quake* didn't display your weapons in a huge 3D window. In your review, you seemed to have nothing nice to say about *Daikatana* – and yet you gave it 53 per cent. It deserves about 12 per cent, perhaps even less! What has John Romero been doing for the last four years? It's a major blow for Ion Storm's reputation, and it makes you wonder whether or not *Deus Ex* will be worth the wait."

Ryan Snook

★ "After reading the review of *Daikatana* in your last issue I thought that you were probably being a tad unfair. I thought (foolishly) that you were just taking out your anger on it because it was an easy target (being delayed enormously and the reputation of Romero hanging in the balance). Oh how wrong I was. This is the worst excuse for a PC game I have ever seen. I couldn't un-install it quick enough. Fighting mechanical frogs and

crane flies with a peashooter isn't my idea of fun. I just hope that people listen to your review instead of buying it because of the over-hyped previews that the game had. I admit I was wrong and I am sorry. Maybe they should replace the 'funny' quit game message with 'Do you want to buy this game?' or 'Are you glad you

a game from the likes of John Romero? You most probably just took off marks for its lateness. With a sense of smugness, I went off to buy it. Then, 20 minutes later I was groaning in misery and smacking my head against the monitor. I sobbed as a monster ran into my line of fire. I screamed when a mechanical toad killed

“This is the most dim-witted, lousy attempt at an FPS ever. Even if it came out when it was supposed to, it would have sucked”

ALEX PITULA ON *DAIKATANA*

bought this game?" instead. This would certainly be a clever and witty way of keeping people playing. I am glad you helped me choose the right path as I could have actually bought this pile of pants when it finally arrived on the shop shelves."

Manintheshack

★ "After I read your review of *Daikatana*, I was incredibly pissed off; the entire thing sounded like the words of cynical teenager. What right did you have to slag off

me. I gritted my teeth as line after line of crap dialogue was spouted. I had just wasted the best part of £50 on a CD only worthy of being a coaster, a Frisbee, an ashtray or a gun target (the last one being the most preferable). If I have the chance, I'll wipe my arse with it. So please, believe *PC ZONE*. And John Romero, I hope you and your shitty Ion Storm be damned to Hell. And you can shove that sword where the sun don't shine."

Anonymous



You're shit and you know you are.

★ “*Daikatana* is a beautifully crafted and designed game and easily puts all other FPS games to shame. The levels are simply magnificent and full of new and brilliant ideas. The enemies are very intelligent and the sidekicks are like playing with friends on the Internet. The weapons are brilliantly designed and have effects that will send you into a dream world. And can you actually believe *Daikatana* runs on the *Quake II* engine? It looks magnificent with unbelievable textures and beautifully curved surfaces. Of course all this is what John Romero wanted to read about his pride and joy, but actually *Daikatana* sucks. And when I say sucks I mean that this is the most unattractive dim-witted, lousy attempt at an FPS ever. I think even if it came out when it was supposed to, it still would have sucked.”

Alex Pitula

COMMENT

As you can see, the derision for Romero's misconceived and obscenely ugly baby is universal. It's a miracle *Eidos* didn't abort the project, and we'll be sending the man himself a box of programming prophylactics to avoid any future embarrassments.

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION

REVIEWED #92, PCZ August
SCORE 90%

What we thought

“As long as you don't come to *Vampire* with the wrong expectations, you are unlikely to find a more challenging, rewarding or gorgeous RPG.”

What you said

“Could I possibly borrow the copy of *Vampire: The Masquerade* that Mark Hill reviewed as it sounds so much better than the shallow, boring and uninspiring game I have had the misfortune to play. 90 per cent? I wouldn't give it 60 per cent!”

Yes, it looks good but that is where the praise ends. The game is as linear as a Roman road. It is void of all atmosphere. The combat system is pathetically mundane and requires little or no skill. The AI for both the coterie and enemies is a complete joke and finally, the pathfinding has

got to be the worst that I have ever encountered.

I have been gaming since the days of the ZX81 and this has got to be one of the greatest let downs in gaming history. When will games designers learn that fancy graphics do not make a great game? It is the gameplay.”

Martin Shillitoe, Wakefield

★ “Normally the best advice you can get is to wait for the *PC ZONE* review before buying the game. However, I had to have a copy of *Vampire The Masquerade* and so I pre-ordered it. It was still on order when I read your review and I began to get rather excited about receiving the game. When it arrived, I installed it, ran it and... wow – what a game, truly deserving your Award For Excellence. So, where's the but?... Well, let's re-cap the review. Mark Hill mentioned that “you are unlikely to find a more, challenging, rewarding or gorgeous RPG.” Chris Anderson said it is “the new benchmark for the role-playing genre.” Dave Woods called it “engrossing and brilliant.” Finally Richie Shoemaker pointed out that “it's certainly the direction I'd like the genre to go.”

As an RPG fan, you'll get no argument from me but... why only 90 per cent? The comments I've quoted sound like a benchmark game to me, so why score it less than *System*



Shock 2? Don't get me wrong, I loved *SS2*, I even voted for it as last year's game of the year. However, *SS2* is simply not as good as *Vampire*. *Vampire*'s graphics, interface, story and sound/music are unsurpassed in the RPG genre. No, it's not free-roaming, nor are many other RPGs. Yes, it's very linear, but if we're honest *SS2* was pretty linear itself (though it disguised it well) Come on *ZONE*, admit that *Vampire* is the RPG benchmark



and, readers, go out and buy it immediately.”

Andrew Boylan

COMMENT

These two letters pretty much summarise the two opposite reactions *Vampire* has been getting from gamers worldwide. Some can't get beyond the fact that the game is so linear, probably because screenshots had led them to expect something completely different. As for being the new RPG benchmark, that accolade falls to *Deus Ex*.

EARTH 2150

REVIEWED #90, PCZ June
SCORE 86%

What we thought

“If publishers like Westwood follow suit, real-time strategy fans are in for an exhilarating ride, one that starts right here.”

What you said

★ “I want to be the first to start this fight. *Earth 2150* versus *Ground Control*. While both games are amazing, *Earth 2150* should in no way lose out to *GC*. When *C&C:Tiberian Sun* came out everyone was saying that it was ‘the’ defining RTS game. But it brought nothing new, and frankly it would have ended up in the bin. *Earth 2150*, on the other hand, is everything that *TS* tried to be. The graphics are amazing, both games are, but *Earth* has a few things better. Lowering the terrain and hiding units in it in the dark is superb, while having enemy units walk past your base is tense. *GC* offers none of this and, while some people are going to like it, the majority want to build bases. *GC* at times feels like only half a game, or one that has the tense first few moments removed.

How it can receive a higher score is really ridiculous.”

Dennis Ostell

Comment

Does anyone else want to join the fight?

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR!

REVIEWED #89, PCZ May
SCORE 93%

What we thought

“If you want realism, historical accuracy, atmosphere and replayability, *Shogun* stands head and shoulders above everything else.”

What you said

★ “What a refreshing experience. *Shogun* has pumped new life into a stale genre. Once I installed the full game, my first thoughts were like a baby with a clean nappy on! It's my daughter's birthday and me and my bird need to get up early to make cakes and jellies, but it's 2am and I want some more.

Haven't got the hang of the Risk elements in the game yet, but tomorrow, I'll read the manual while listening (ignoring) to my mother-in-law trying to slag me off.

And I thought that the PC was only good for first-person shooters! To you all out there, if you aren't into RTS games, this is well worth a try.”

Scott Holmes

★ “I got bored really quickly with *Shogun*. It was good at first and pretty easy to dominate on the Easy setting but, after a few games on Normal, where none of the other forces honour or help you in an Alliance, I lost almost every battle and couldn't get enough rice to build anything at all. This is one of my biggest gripes; it would have been nice to be able to fight with your allies (or call for assistance) but all an allegiance does is prohibit you from crossing their territory. And after a while you cannot expand without doing so. Why have a three-tier system where you can either be at war, hold a cease fire or form an allegiance when the allegiance has no purpose over a cease fire?”

GE

Comment

We've read Scott Holmes' comment a few times now, and we still don't understand what he's on about or why he wants to have more jelly early in the morning. We've been playing *Shogun* for months now, and we're still not bored with it. Anybody encountered the same problems that GE has? [X]



REVIEWARAMA

We're still only receiving the smallest trickle of reviews from you. We've already told you we'll only give away the prize to a really worthy entry. So TRY HARDER. Don't any of you want to win a scooter?

HOTDOG

the new movie magazine
issue 3 on sale July 27



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HOTDOG

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GONE IN 60 SECONDS

SNATCH



BRAD, VINNIE AND
GUY RITCHIE

* Sodding title correct at time of going to press'd

GOODFELLAS

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MENA SUVARI: FREE POSTER

EAT YOUR FAVOURITE FILM STAR!

X-MEN SFX 'I CENSORED PULP FICTION'



STICKING TO YOUR GUNS

★ ARMED Richie Shoemaker



Going online for the first time in any game still scares me a little. It's perhaps the apprehension of not knowing what you are doing and making a fool of yourself that worries me. The fear isn't quite so high with first-person

games, but when I first played *Ultima Online* a year or so back – and more recently with *Allegiance* – the excitement was mixed with a tangible feeling of foreboding. What would I say to people? Will I just be another whipping boy?

For me, chatting to people online isn't something I particularly like, neither is getting into character and role-playing. *Allegiance* was different, but whenever I talked to people in *UO* and they found out I had just started, they set about relieving me of my possessions.

If you're an online gaming virgin, I'm probably not doing a very good job selling the experience, but as in real-life, online gaming worlds are populated by the good, the bad and certainly the ugly. The difference is that once you find a group of people you get along with, online games come into their own. It's all about meeting people. Keep yourself to yourself and you'll always be eyed with suspicion. Even if you're shit, stick with it. Within a few weeks you'll be a master.

PCZONLINE CONTENTS

108 QUAKE 3 FORTRESS BETA 1D

Fast, furious and bloody, pretty much just the way we like it. Tony Lamb takes a closer look.

109 STAR TREK CONQUEST ONLINE

It features everything from Borg cubes to Federation starships, Romulan diplomats and Klingon warriors. Check out our online review to see if it lives up to its *Star Trek* name.

111 HALF-LIFE UPDATED

With smoother graphics and new networking code we find out if the latest online *Half-Life* incarnation is worth getting exciting about.

REVIEWS POLICY

When it comes to mods and total conversions (TCs) for games such as *Half-Life*, they are often released in beta form (ie unfinished) and are generally being updated constantly. When we review them we will always try to take into consideration that they are often produced by teams working just for the love of it and released free of charge for our enjoyment. Even so, there's a lot of pap out there and downloading such things can often be a waste of good surfing time.

With retail online games, code is always being updated and although we can't provide regular updates, we'll try to review major ones as and when they occur.

NEWS



An online racing game? About time, we say.

MOTOR CITY ONLINE

Richie Shoemaker feels the need to speed online

Before George Lucas penned the immortal *Star Wars* trilogy, his best-known work was on *American Graffiti*, a film about a group of '50s high school graduates on their last night in town. More importantly, it centred around racing souped-up hot rods all in the name of street cred, which is where *Motor City Online* comes in. (Although being developed by the *Need For Speed* team, the game won't become a part of the *NFS* series as was originally intended.)

Set in the 'golden age' of American motoring, *Motor City Online* will combine racing action and role-playing in a persistent world where players meet, set up and race their cars for cash and notoriety. Parts can be bought and traded across a whole city while grease monkeys can tune their cars to perfection, with the aim being to ascend the rankings and become king of the streets. Those not racing can place bets on others, even wagering their own cars to earn yet more money to build up their vehicle.

Dozens of cars from the era, from the 1932 Ford Coupe to the 1973 Firebird, will each be accurately modelled – all with official approval from Chrysler, Ford and General Motors and with realistic damage modelling. Each car will be made up of more than 6,500 polygons, each with customised paint jobs and thousands of spare parts to tinker with between each race. If you don't want to race, you can just cruise into a diner and chat with other drivers.

There will be league races on sanctioned circuits and city streets, 'outlaw' races through back alleys, and special tournaments. As people build up their bank balances and their credibility, they may want to join racing clubs, which operate much like RPG-style guilds. The game is set for worldwide release at the end of the year. www.motorcityonline.net is the Website you need to check out.



A car. No, really.



Let's hope it plays as good as it looks.



Shadowbane is certainly one of the best-looking online RPGs on the horizon.



There will be all sorts of pre-set tactical formations.



As well as typed messages, you can gesture to other players.



Creepy coloured lighting should add an edge to the game.



If you can't stand the heat, stay out in the open.

SHADOWBANE

The Gathering Of Developers prepare to take on *EverQuest*

Shadowbane is different. It's also impossible to outline exactly what Shadowbane really is without filling ten pages. Having teamed up with The Gathering Of Developers, Wolfpack Studios, who is producing it, can't define what it is either – and that's great because it means that at last there's an online game with lots of potential. Or at least we think so.

Shadowbane is an online fantasy world, but that's where any real resemblance to *EverQuest*, *Ultima Online* or *Asheron's Call* ends. With a lot of MUD creation history behind them the producers are trying to create a world with some really cool options and "lots of social interactions". Sounds a bit prissy? Well the interactions they are looking for are from those who want power, those who want to lie, cheat, connive and murder their way to the top.

Players will enter Shadowbane and join a guild – either player- or GM-run – simply because it's dangerous to be alone (it's the quickest path to power, basically). Apart from mutual defence, guilds can claim entire cities in the game and allow their members to buy weapons, armour and train there.

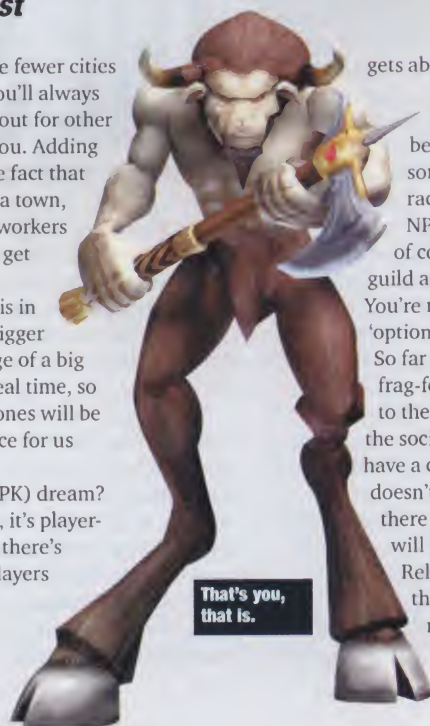
But there will always be fewer cities than there are guilds so you'll always have to keep a beady one out for other guilds who want to oust you. Adding blood to the carnage is the fact that the longer you hold on to a town, the more developed your workers there will become, so you get access to better armour, weapons and training. This in turn makes you an even bigger target for conquest. A siege of a big town could take days in real time, so guilds spread over time zones will be at an advantage (that's nice for us Brits). Good isn't it?

So it's a player killers (PK) dream? Well Shadowbane isn't PK, it's player-vs-player (PvP), and, yes, there's a difference. High-level players killing lots of newbies just doesn't pay off in Shadowbane: the killer

gets absolutely nothing and the newbie gets almost nothing.

Your enemies are other players, be they one of the normal races or some of the very untypical 'bad' races or monsters... oh and also NPC varieties. There's a huge array of combinations for race, religion, guild and skills – and we do mean huge. You're not even limited to just one 'option' for your characters life. So far it sounds like a big fantasy frag-fest, but there's a lot of strategy to the game in both the fighting and the social side of things. Towns may have a controlling guild but that doesn't stop other guilds operating there – allegiances can be formed, as will allegiance trees of guilds.

Release is set for early next year through Take 2, until then plenty more information can be found at www.shadowbane.com.



THE MOD SQUAD

PAINKEEP ARENA FOR QUAKE III



Evolved:
Rob Waring.

Some of you may remember the original PainKeep conversion for Quake, a deathmatch mod that expanded Quake's now ageing arsenal with sentry guns, black holes and cans of baked beans. It was wickedly hilarious and had all of us at PC ZONE hooked for a good couple

of months. Unfortunately, PainKeep never appeared for Quake II (thanks to the team's involvement on the Odyssey add-on for Battlezone), but it will for Quake III Arena. We caught up with developer, Team Evolve's (www.teamevolve.com) Rob Waring, to find out about his plans to make PainKeep Arena one of Quake III's best free add-ons yet.

PCZ PainKeep was pretty unique in its day. What are you doing to keep it fresh for Quake III?

We felt that Quake III Arena moved too far away from Quake's classic medieval, dark atmosphere. We've successfully brought back a few maps from the original PainKeep. We did that for the nostalgia fans. We have taken liberties with other maps and incorporated newer features of QIII. For example, we've placed jump pads where lifts used to be, which required other areas of the level to change to reflect the new movement. All in all, the maps still contain the level architecture the originals did, but moving around in them will be about 75 per cent new.

PCZ What's so special about PainKeep Arena, compared to other QIII mods?

The QIII mods I've seen so far, like *Fortress and Jailbreak*, have basically been team-based CTF games. PainKeep Arena is straight deathmatch. On steroids. The weapons and gameplay are what will attract players to PainKeep Arena. The weapons include the Harpoon Gun, the Gravity Well, the Auto Sentry and the infamous Can Of Beans – all the classic weapons, back in glorious QIII style. The game also includes variations on more traditional weapons, like the nailgun and shotgun (exploding shells), yet what makes PainKeep special is the innovation in these new weapons, as well as the levels that have been designed with players utilising the Harpoon Gun to get into nice camping spots, as well as to grab power-ups and items and pull them to the player.

PCZ How does mod development differ now compared to the days of Doom and Quake?

The biggest difference in creating a mod today would be the amount of information that's available on the Internet. This information has been collected and indexed by people who like making mods, and like sharing how to do it. We didn't have a lot of this info when we started and had to figure a lot of it out ourselves. The online gaming community has grown so much over the last year and now when you have a problem, a little research will find you an answer.

PCZ When might we be able to savour the delights of PainKeep Arena?

It's at the alpha stage at the moment. We'll soon be taking applications on the www.painkeep.com Website for beta testers. We'll then beta test for three or four weeks and, if all goes well, PainKeep Arena should be out early August. It'll be a PainFull summer! (Ho-ho – Ed.)



PainKeep for Quake III.



StarCraft fans are in for a treat.



You only start off with a few different units, but you can soon design your own.

SHATTERED GALAXY

We unearth another online real-time strategy game that's worth getting excited about

Pitched as a cross between *Starcraft*, *Master Of Orion* and *Ultima Online*, *Shattered Galaxy* casts the player as a human warlord, aligned to one of four factions, with the aim of conquering an entire world and beyond.

The concept is a simple one. After choosing your race you start at your faction's capital city. With limited experience and cash you can buy up a small troop of robots, go out in search of aliens to build up your experience or set out to take over an enemy territory. However, because you can only control a small number of units, teamwork is essential and because any number of allies and enemies can join the battle at any time, single

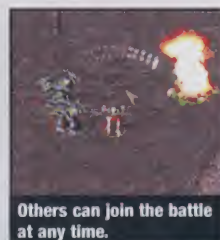
battles can become tense and frantic affairs. Once you've won you can divide the spoils of war and set about managing your new territory.

Research and diplomacy will play a key part in the game. There will be more than 40 different types of vehicle chassis with countless different weapons, engines, sensors and armour to add to them. The more experience and cash you accrue, the better the units you can take into war.

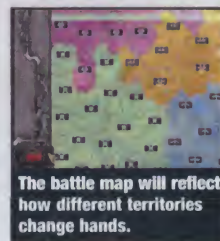
Shattered Galaxy, as its name suggests, isn't based on just one planet. Harsher worlds exist elsewhere and it is across these that new factions, no doubt set up by higher level players, will spring up.

Because all the fighting is between customised robots, the player's character is essentially immortal. If their territory is lost and cash depleted, they can take their experience to another faction and start building up their forces again. To add to the hierarchical structure, each faction will have a democratically elected leader who can set taxes to be divided among four departments, each with their own leader.

Currently going through beta testing (you can download the files from www.sgalaxy.com), *Shattered Galaxy* is scheduled to hit American shelves later this year. Hopefully, a UK release won't be too far away.



Others can join the battle at any time.



The battle map will reflect how different territories change hands.

THE SARAC PROJECT

An online gaming world with a difference

Taking the mix of trading and combat, pioneered by *Elite*, underwater has been done before in Criterion's *Subculture*, but never has such a game been designed primarily for online play. Developer VR-1, however, aims to be the first with *The Sarac Project*.

VR-1 is well known in the online gaming world, having developed both *Air Attack* and *Rumble In The Void* on Wireplay, as well as a couple of games for AOL.

Although we don't know as yet whether *The Sarac Project* will be exclusive to any one games site, we

do know that it looks promising. Set below the waves of an alien world, the aim is to trade in raw materials across a number of undersea settlements, with a view to setting up your own refineries that process minerals into tradable items. There will be four main cities within the game, one of which the player will be aligned to. In return, their home city will offer safe refuge from enemy vessels. No release date has yet been set, but you can check out www.vr1.com for updates.



Elite underwater? Sounds good to us.



It looks like *MechWarriors* fans will be well catered for.



Michael Flatley's evil twin brother?

DARK SECTOR

It's the next chapter in the *Unreal* saga. A blending of genres is heading this way

When Digital Extremes, the Canadian co-developer of *Unreal* and *Unreal Tournament* announced its next game, *Dark Sector*, some months ago (promising to mix up first-person action and space combat within one game – all online of course) we were surprised that no one seemed to be getting excited. Maybe our imaginations were running wild, but the thought

of meeting your mates online, killing off your enemies on one planet then hiring some shuttle pilot to take you to a space station to wipe out some

more seemed to be a good one. Space combat fans and first-person action fans together in one big deathmatch across Earth's Solar System. *Unreal Tournament* meets *Starlancer* across an ever-expanding and persistent galaxy. Simple. Brilliant.

"We want to focus on the people who love action games and first-person combat," says *Dark Sector*'s lead designer/programmer, James Schmalz. "The space-combat side of the game will be much more action-oriented instead of a realistic physics-based simulation. If you are familiar with first-person action controls you will be familiar with the space flight controls."

What we like about *Dark Sector* is the fact FPS fans won't have to don flight jackets to get anywhere in the

game. If they wish they can hire pilots (some of whom might never want to leave their ship) to take them to other planets, space stations, or even board huge capital ships. Once there they can fight new enemies and player clans and earn money by completing missions. They can, of course, choose to just kill indiscriminately. In the meantime, pilots aligned to a ground team can go off and add to the coffers by gunning down other ships.

Although still early in the development cycle, *Dark Sector* has gotten off to a good start, thanks to the decision to stick with the *Unreal Tournament* engine. "We will be making massive modifications to the engine to suit our needs," says Schmalz. "Things such as a new renderer and the addition of the persistence framework are two of the biggest changes. Using the *UT* engine gives us a fantastic head start in our development. The underlying network code rocks as does being able to get gameplay up and running right away."

As well as real-time voice communications, Digital Extremes will be perfecting *UT*'s bot code to allow AI-controlled ships and characters to fill up the game: "They will be dynamically adjusted depending on the player load," says James. "And we will have everything from small fighters to huge capital ships. Additionally, we

have a lot of ideas that we want to explore after the game is out, but we will be directed significantly by the community. In fact, we have some gameplay concepts that take direct input from the players that will help mould the game's future."

One aspect that will be controlled by the player community, specifically the development community, is the addition of third-party mods into the game. Although the main game will be persistent, there will be holodeck-style arenas where players can fight without fear of losing money or notoriety, some of which – most eventually – will be created outside of Digital Extremes. "Mods are extremely important. Look at *Half-Life* with *Counter-Strike*. Huge numbers of people are playing that, much more than the original multiplayer component of the game. We hope we will be able to work with the mod teams to make their stuff work within our game universe. We will accept whatever makes sense, but it has to be filtered through the development team."

Although there are no plans as yet to include armoured combat, it seems if Digital Extremes don't include it, someone else might in the future. Maybe it's this potential that has our imaginations working overtime. Until we see the game running, however, we don't have much else to go on. We live in hope.

Dark Sector should be out some time next year. Until then, check www.digitalextremes.com.

SHORTS

FREE FOOTBALL

Out to compete with Anco's soon-to-be-released *Player Manager Online* (www.anco.co.uk) is *PureFootball Online Manager*. Developed by Pure Entertainment, the chaps behind freebie games site FreeLoader, the game is due out in September in time for the new season. Before then *PureFootball Fantasy Manager*, offering cash prizes from upwards of £250, should be available to play from August. Check out www.free-loader.com/purefootball to find out more details.

NEW RACE FOR ALLEGIANCE

Microsoft is poised to expand its online space sim, *Allegiance*, by adding a fifth race, the Rixian Unity. The Rixians are the first alien faction to join the game and although their ships are unable to use missiles, they can research technology much faster than the other four sides. We believe the new race will only be available to play for those who are registered on Microsoft's *Allegiance Zone*. Check out www.zone.com/allegiance



NOX QUEST

By the time you read this Westwood should have released a free add-on for its *Diablo*-style RPG *Nox*. A co-operative multiplayer add-on, *Nox Quest* will allow up to six players to adventure through a series of maps, each one more difficult than the last. Spells, skills, armour and magical bits and bobs will be randomly placed at the beginning of each level. Download from www.westwood.com

ACES HIGHER

A new version of *Aces High* (v1.03) has been released – v1.02, you may remember, was reviewed in the last issue of *PC ZONE*. Nifty coloured lighting, compatibility with Roger Wilco voice communication software and three new aircraft and vehicles are included in the 8Mb download, which is available from www.hitechcreations.com. A terrain editor is due to be released shortly.



Ⓢ You'll have to earn money if you want the best armour.



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HORIZONS: EMPIRES OF ISTARIA

From afar, another online RPG cometh

Horizons is a huge undertaking in many ways. Artifact Entertainment is trying to create a world much bigger and more varied than *Ultima Online's* Britannia – to put things in perspective you can add all the lands of Norrath, Britannia and Derreth together and they won't match the total size of Istar. But it doesn't stop there, add to this player-capable realms of Air and Water, with creatures such as Dragons, Demons and Limurians (an underwater reptile), and you get the feeling that depth is as much of a priority for the developers as size.

A lot of *Horizons* is still under well-protected raps, but info is sneaking out slowly and the 'final'

engine graphics are out and look nice – imagine *EverQuest* with a cartoony edge. Races are substantially different from the norm – the Elf lovers will not be disappointed, but there are also lizard types and Giants. Players won't be limited in warfare either: fight on land, sea and in the air, just remember that the Dragon you are hunting isn't AI, it's another player.

An unusual aspect of *Horizons* is that players will age, have a family and will need to mature. This particularly applies to races like the Dragons who, although ultimately very powerful, start off very weak. How death is to be handled is not yet known but Artifact is promising many changes to the normal approach.

Horizons (Istaria) is split into independent realms which each have their own distinct politics, religions and attitudes. Furthermore, they will also develop their own plot-lines and players will have the opportunity to become involved in these – or not. Player-killing (PK-ing) is not detailed much, though vague promises of "something very different" keep coming from the team, with hints of a player's Deity coming to help him out if a high level PK attacks him – how does this work? Nobody knows.

Overall *Horizons* sounds great, but it's too early to say too much. One thing is for certain: you'll need a ninja PC to meet the minimum

① Fantasy bloke wields big sword. No change there then.

specs. PIII500, 128Mb RAM, 32Mb 3D card, 3D soundcard... this won't be a game for the light-hearted (or those with a light wallet). Having said that, there's no projected release as yet (2002 is stated) and it's early days – don't be surprised if we don't see *Horizons* for quite a while, by which time the spec won't look so daunting.

Get more details and early screenshots at: www.artifact-entertainment.com

SHORTS

QUAKE ON THE SIDE

If you want a new perspective on *Quake III*, a multiplayer mod is in circulation that switches the first-person view to a side-scrolling one. Called *TargetQuake*, the mod features three maps and was recently given the seal of approval by id Software's Christian Antkow who has created a map specially for it. We'll take a look at it next issue. In the meantime, *TargetQuake* can be found at <http://avatar.telefragged.com/tq.htm>.



ALL IN ONE

Although we reviewed instant messaging software last issue, a new piece of software has since been released going by the name of Socket. Combining the features of ICQ, conferencing and online games software like Wireplay, Socket lets you run shared applications across the Internet. We've yet to try it out, but you can by visiting www.get-socket.com

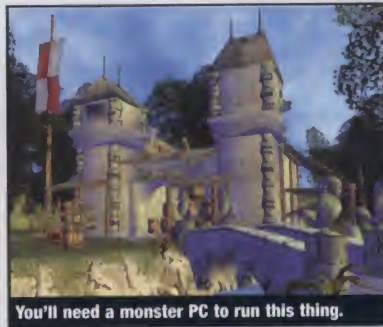


SUBSPACE LIVES

With Virgin Interactives downsizing a year ago, we'd thought that its online 2D space action game *SubSpace* had bitten the dust. However, after some serious hunting across the Internet we found that the game is alive and well and thriving on a number of Websites, one of the best of which is www.subspacehq.com. The game, which can be accurately described as a multiplayer version of the arcade classic, *Asteroids* – without the asteroids, that is – was reviewed by us well over two years ago. We liked it then and we'd probably like it now.



Fight on land, sea and air.



You'll need a monster PC to run this thing.



Better than *EverQuest*? We shall see.

PROJECT ENTROPIA

Cool RPG alert, and not a goblin in sight

In a similar vein to *Neocron*, visited last month, *Project Entropia* is an online RPG set far into the future on a planet where human colonists fight among themselves and against aliens, mutants and rogue machines. Players will start in the main city of New Haven on the planet Calypso, a relatively safe zone from where players can venture into the wilderness and visit settlements.

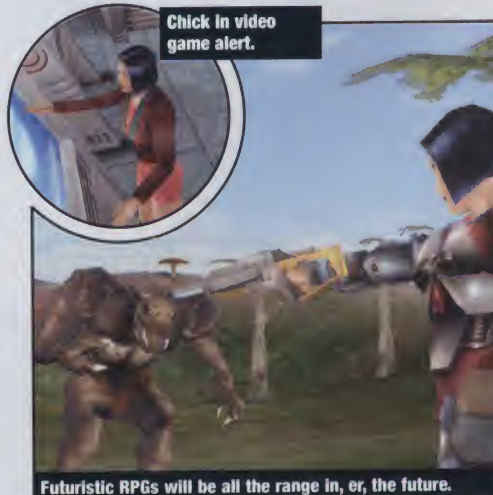
The developers, Swedish-based Mindark Studios, is hoping *Project Entropia* will pull about 100,000 people into its persistent world, all based on the one server. Combat, co-operation and questing will each hold equal importance in the game, but what may swing it for the

typically loyal bunch of online role-players is the way in which they will be able to directly shape the development of the world, through successfully completing missions and setting up their own.

More in the *Ultima Online* mould than *EverQuest*, the online inhabitants of *Project Entropia* will be able to set themselves up in business, even build outposts and administer them.

The game will utilise first-person views for combat, with plenty of weaponry and psionic powers to master.

There is no firm date for release as yet, so keep an eye out at www.project-entropia.com to keep up to date with all the latest developments.



Futuristic RPGs will be all the range in, er, the future.

BLACK & WHITE

On the eve of *Black & White*'s hotly anticipated release **Richie Shoemaker** gets down and dirty with **Peter Molyneux** about the game's many exciting online prospects

In Lionhead's first game, the eagerly awaited *Black & White*, you play a god. From atop your Olympian throne, the aim is to guide your people and spread the word of your being, either by using the stick or the carrot, or a combination of both. You can be good or evil, but being right and wrong has nothing to do with morality, only competence. The more your subjects worship you, whether they are forced to, or do so by their own volition, the greater your power is to enact your will. What is a god without belief after all?

But there's much more to *Black & White* than healing the sick and uprooting trees. Much more. To help and, in some cases, hinder you, you'll find and nurture a familiar – an earthly form to your ethereal – which is a Pegasus to your Zeus. These creatures – from cows and lions to gorillas – act out your will in accordance with their own and though they will do your bidding, they need constant attention to keep to the right – or wrong – path.

But you knew all that already. We've been harping on about *Black & White* for more than two years and although you know about the spells, the

creatures and the gorgeous graphics, you may not be aware just how all this will translate online, how such a hybrid of genres – from role-playing to real-time strategy – can work in an online world where up until now genres have remained aggravatingly static.

TWO BECOME ONE

Far from just a simple case of logging on, choosing a god, a creature and a map, *Black & White*'s online features are built around the single-player game. You may find the concept odd, but the aim is for you to be able to take your persona from the single-player game to the multiplayer, and after you've beefed up your creature and yourself, you can bring what you've learnt in terms of tangible skills back into the single-player campaign.

"Whether you are online or off, your creature and your player personality is continual and ongoing," says Lionhead's founder Peter Molyneux.

SPECIAL REPORT

"That means your creature and your profile is a true reflection of everything you've done in *Black & White*. Normally you go into an online game such as *Quake*, fight a bit, come out and that's it. In *Black & White*, you fight online and your creature gets a bit better. He learns things that you can take back into the single-player game."

The watchword here is persistence.

However, while pure online games have no trouble with the concept of continuity, trying to merge what are effectively two separate worlds – the online and the single-player – has opened a whole can of worms at Lionhead. Although, there's an important distinction between persistent worlds and persistent characters.

"Obviously it's been a nightmare to get right because, if we look at a nightmare scenario, a player can start the game, get a baby creature and after 15 minutes say 'sod this' and then go online. He goes online for two weeks, builds up his creature then goes back into the single-player game after having only done 15 minutes of the story with this mammoth creature. You can imagine that balancing all the things that happen in the single-player game with this in mind has not been, well, a trivial task."

GATHER ROUND

There are essentially two sides to *Black & White*'s online facilities, both of which, as previously mentioned, will draw on the single-player game. However, one, called *The Gathering*, as well as being incorporated into the final release, will also be released as a free standalone game and as such will not draw upon *Black & White*'s offline campaign. Confused? Don't be. Peter explains.

"When you join *The Gathering* you'll be asked a few simple questions and you'll be given a creature."



Our money's on the heifer.



Not everyone in *The Gathering* will be friendly.

ONLINE



little kitty."



You too can own one of these lovely pets. Don't forget to feed it, ya hear?

“In *Black & White* you fight online and your creature is just a little bit better. He learns things that you can take back into the single-player game”



It's good to see Lionhead like to keep their desktops clean. Unlike us.



Incredible effects without lag. Almost sounds too good to be true.



A god's eye view.



◀ You'll be able to do all the things that people who own *Black & White* can do, but when you leave *The Gathering* you lose that creature. It's a bit shameless I know, but hopefully that will hook people into buying the full game." (We shall be cover mounting *The Gathering* exclusively on a future PC ZONE cover disk. Shameless, we know, but hopefully it will hook people into buying the magazine.)

While the main draw of *Black & White* is a battle between the gods and their creatures over terrain we are all familiar with, *The Gathering* is an off-world place where the creatures congregate with a view to enhancing their abilities.

"At any time while playing the single-player game you may want to take your creature out of the story you are currently playing and meet other people's creatures to fight with them, trade skills, chat with them and learn moves. For example, if you had a creature and I had a creature and you had a sequence of special fighting moves, I could say, 'show us your moves' and my creature could learn just by watching. Very cool, especially when you could take that creature from the online world back into the single-player game – if, of course, you own it. Another cool thing is that the creature hasn't got any limits to his learning, so some creatures will learn some incredible things by what people teach them. You can still use your godly powers to do things, it's just that you do things specifically to other player's creatures. The important difference between *The Gathering* and *Black & White Worlds* is that you don't actually own any territory or control any of your subjects, there is no concept of it."

“There is a plan, and it's a distant plan at the moment, to produce a game called *Black & White Universe*, where you can have a whole world that is persistent online”

WORLD OF SUPPORT

Black & White Worlds is the meat on the bone of *Black & White*'s online game. Again, the plan is that you can take your characters from offline to on and vice versa, but unlike *The Gathering*, *Black & White Worlds* takes place over the deserts, woods, mountains and wastelands of the main game.

"The idea is that, as with the single-player game, you are a god, you've got a creature and you just want to battle other gods," says Peter. "There'll be a server with a number of worlds set up with a match-making system which, rather like



In the world of *Black & White* the comedy never stops.



Expect large-scale battles as rival gods have it out online.

Diablo and *Quake*, allows you to just go out there and fight it out.

Each god will have its own citadel. As Peter explains: "It's more a case of last man standing, where every person's citadel is effectively a flag and when you capture all the citadels you win." Co-operative play will, of course, feature heavily, with players able to set up clans and band together to thwart the plans of other gods. And for all of us tight UK gamers, *Black & White* should be light on the wallet.

"In terms of cost, the financial model hasn't been fully worked out yet, but at the start it certainly won't cost anything to play *Black & White* online. What we might do – and we're still talking about it – is have some sort of VIP area that you can go into for a small charge, but to be honest, nothing has been set in stone," says Peter.

In terms of ongoing support for *Black & White*, Lionhead is looking to the long-term. Having sunk three years of blood, sweat and beers into the game, Peter Molyneux isn't prepared to see it die after six months, as is the case with so many games. In fact, on the online side of things, *Black & White*'s future may well stretch to a brand new, online-only game.

"I think a lot of online communities need to be maintained, you need to continually refresh things and have new and different things just to make it seem fresh all the time. We're in the process of setting up a company called *Black & White Ltd*,

the sole purpose of which is to continue to maintain the online portion of *Black & White*. They'll be doing some really cool stuff, for example people will eventually be able to create their own worlds. Later on in the year there will also be an add-on pack where you can buy clothes for your creature, upgrade his intelligence and keep the whole world evolving.

"There is a plan, and it's a distant plan at the moment, to produce a game called *Black & White Universe*, where you can have a whole world that is persistent online, where you can leave your creature in and he'll look after things when you're not around and when you do log on, you're in control. That world will change as people go in and out, but that's a lot of work and I don't see that coming out for a fair few months." Scoop!

DO THE FUNKY GIBBON

The merging of offline and online play through *The Gathering* and *Black & White Worlds*, and the ongoing support and plans for *Black & White Universe*, all point to the fact that Lionhead is keen to prove that online gaming has yet to realise its full potential. But there are other features within the here-and-now version of *Black & White* that show Peter Molyneux still has a touch of originality within his games.

"There is quite a lot of online stuff hidden in *Black & White*'s online features. For example,



The next round's on Lionhead it seems.

you'll notice after a while your creature will develop an overwhelming urge to create his own Web page. He'll put pictures of his best friend, whether it's an off or online friend. He'll give details about himself within a file that you can put on the Web and he'll even keep it updated. Also he'll find out what music you listen to, what the weather is like in your local area - all little tricks, none of which are hard to do. *Black & White* has full weather simulation built-in, so all we have to do is go to the right Website, download the right information and we can reflect the weather inside *Black & White* as what's outside your window, which is pretty cool. Also, if a creature is going to dance in time with the music, he shouldn't breakdance to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, it wouldn't be right. It's far better to go to a Website, download the profile of the track you're listening to and the creature selects the most appropriate dance to learn."

All this may sound a little unnecessary and to some, downright creepy, but by having your creature interact outside of the main game, you could argue that players will develop an attachment to their creatures they might not otherwise acquire. Often in games it is hard to care about the characters you control and even harder for developers to inject personality into their games. Lionhead, like the Molyneux-led Bullfrog before it, has done more to advance this aspect in

gaming than any other developer. With *Black & White* and the Internet, they are poised to take things a significant stage further.

If *Black & White* is going to be Lionhead's first and last PC game developed in-house, there's no doubt it'll be a debut to rival The La's one and only album. The difference is that development on *Black & White* will be an ongoing process, with almost all of it occurring online. Lionhead will be turning its attentions on pastures and formats new, but that's not to say that the company's future efforts won't appear on PC at a later date via one of its satellite developers. In the meantime, Peter Molyneux will, of course, be keeping a watchful eye on things both within and without his close-knit stable of development teams

"What I'm really looking forward to is some of the Japanese designers coming online. To be honest with you, the online games we currently see are going to pale into insignificance when they come on board. What's lacking at the moment, other than the likes of *Quake*, is the instant gameplay hit. There are those games like *EverQuest* where you have to play for hours and hours to get anywhere, which are great if you've got hours and hours of time to spend, but there isn't any online game at the moment, apart from first-person shooters, where you can go online and just see what happens. It would be nice to see all sorts of online games like that." [E]

SEARCH ENGINE

It's still very early days for *Black & White*, but there are dozens of fansites already springing up online, each of which will offer everything you need to know about Lionhead's more than impressive debut.

LIONHEAD

www.lionhead.co.uk

The virtual home of Lionhead Studios, the developer of *Black & White*. Lionhead's site features archives of all the *Black & White* diaries, screenshots, artwork and downloads. Go here if you want to know what the team are up to.



BLACK & WHITE VAULT

<http://bwvault.ign.com>

IGN's *Black & White* Vault is often the first with breaking news and previews. As soon as the game is released the Vault is sure to be one of the premier sites and already offers a sounding board for those eager to get hold of the game.



THE CITADEL

www.thecitadel.net/

Very much reliant on a whole network of fans, the Citadel is one of those sites that likes to have an opinion on anything from news to previews. It's as up to date as the best of them and we get the feeling that the Citadel will develop into one of the biggest independent *Black & White* Websites on the Internet.



LAND OF EDEN

www.landofeden.com

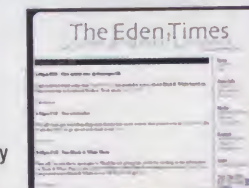
Offering plenty of downloads in the form of interviews and movies, this news-based site is well written and worth going back to. Thanks to the game being still in development, there isn't much in the way of updates, a situation sure to change over the coming months.



THE EDEN TIMES

www.eden-times.com

Both simple and extremely effective, The Eden Times pretty much offers exactly the same as any of the other fansites and although it is not quite as up to date or as in-depth as The Citadel, at least it is less cluttered and is somewhat faster to navigate. Definitely one to keep an eye on.



REVIEWS

QUAKE 3 FORTRESS BETA 1D

★ Free Download from www.q3f.com • Out now

All the classes are present and correct.

Ten maps in CTF and Duel flavour.



Fast and bloody. Just how we like it.



Big outdoor sections in Quake 3? It's true.



More tweaks are needed, but Q3F is looking good.

Tony Lamb drags himself away from TFC and tries its Quake 3 relative

If *Wolfenstein* is the granddaddy of first-person games, *Team Fortress* is the old man of multiplayer mods, appearing as it has for any and every first-person game you'd care to mention, *Half-Life* being the most well known. Now, however, it's back in the loving arms of *Quake*'s latest incarnation, *Quake 3 Arena*, and although *Team Fortress*'s original coders are safely holed up in the *Valve* camp, you could be forgiven for thinking they and the *Q3F* team were one and the same.

Building on the recognised wow factor of the *Quake 3 Arena* engine and the unmistakable atmosphere of the game, *Quake 3 Fortress* gives *Arena* owners the opportunity to see what the hugely popular *Team Fortress Classic* is all about. There are ten maps in a variety of Capture The Flag and Duel flavours and they're all impressive.

It's unusual to see open spaces in *Quake 3* – dark corridors with occasional big rooms have always been the id style – but the maps in *Q3F* have ample sniping and long-range mayhem opportunities, as well as the up-close-and-personal gore-fest that has made *Arena* itself so popular. Some maps have that typically gloomy *Quake* feel, but don't let this put you off.

Since the original *Team Fortress* for *Quake*, the cast of available player classes has been set in stone. *Q3F* fans have the familiar choices of Sniper, Soldier, Medic, Engineer and others. Weapons too are the standard *TF* arsenal, although a couple of tweaks here and there have made things interesting. The sentry gun, for instance, is one of the best.

Setting up *Q3F* was trickier than expected. The mod needs version 1.17 of *Quake 3* (download the patch from www.pczone.co.uk) and configuring the controls is something of an art, thanks to an annoying bug that the developers have promised to sort in the next release.

Once running, though, the game is a joy. Fast, furious and bloody – the way it should be. No single class has an outright advantage (unlike the sniper in *TFC* 1.5) and although not an easy game, it was also one that

“It's unusual to see open spaces in *Quake 3* – dark corridors with occasional big rooms have always been the id style”

was difficult to put down – always a good sign. For *Q3F*, a 56K modem is quite sufficient, but ISDN is better.

Q3F is a welcome addition to the *Quake III* armoury. Well thought out, fun and good to look at. Not yet finished or as good as *TFC*, but well on the way. Give it a couple of months and *Quake 3 Fortress* will be spot on. **PC**

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Latest version of a proven formula • Good maps

DOWNERS Needs a beefy PC • Been there before

79

Destined to be a *Team Fortress* classic



STAR TREK CONQUEST ONLINE

£29.99 • Activision • Out now

We looked for a willing volunteer to review the latest *Star Trek* license. Then phoned Andrew Wright

Star Trek fans have been waiting a long time for a decent game based on the famous Federation and there are several titles currently in the wings. Unfortunately, if *Star Trek Conquest Online* is typical of them, the wait isn't over yet...

Conquest Online is an online turn-based strategy game for a maximum of two players, in which you buy, swap and sell game pieces and pit them against your chosen opponent in fairly basic combat that's almost a cross between chess and Pokémon.

After installing the game, you're taken online to gather your 'unique' collection of a hundred or so pieces, including ships, persons, items and events. These will provide you with a basic starter set to play as the Federation, Klingons, Romulans, or Borgs, or you can play with a mixed group. Games are played

you can usually bring in – or deploy – one or two pieces a turn at the start and perhaps three or four when you have conquered neutral zone planets. Fast and furious it isn't, especially as the game ends on turn 20, and by then you're running out of pieces to deploy...

Pieces include a wide variety of ships and people, from Borg cubes to Federation starships and Romulan diplomats to Klingon warriors. Some characters work well together, providing bonuses when they're on the same ship or planet, and each has different combat and influence ratings, the latter for gaining planetary control from your adversary. Ships and people can be enhanced by a variety of item pieces – weapons, communicators, shields and so on, adding lots of *Star Trek* spice to the melting pot.

The advanced game turn involves several phases – deployment, auction, specials,

“Fast and furious it isn't, especially as the game ends on turn 20, and by then you're running out of pieces to deploy...”

with exactly 41 pieces, one of which is the Q piece that acts like the king in chess. If it's 'checkmated' – stuck on an uncontrolled planet – then you lose the game.

If you want to get some practice in before you hit the connect button, there are five tutorials and three games to play against the AI, one basic and two advanced. The advanced game introduces online piece auctions plus the concept of Q points, another way to win the game.

You have 41 pieces under your command and you can activate them based on the number of control points you have, which in turn, is based on the number of planets you control. In practice,

attack and move. In the auction phase, you and your opponent pool ten pieces, to which the game adds another ten, and then one is selected for auction and bid for with control points.

In the specials phase some powerful pieces – all 'real' characters from the *Star Trek* world – can bring in special powers, ranging from mind control of other pieces to generating additional control points for the player.

Attacks are plotted on the rather simplistic two-dimensional map and, depending on the number of actions allowed, ships can also defend. After that, pieces can move, or in the case of people, they can beam down to



Those three planets look ripe for invasion... but with what?

planets or up to ships. While the actions in each phase are plotted simultaneously by the players, they take place in descending order of control points.

While *Conquest Online* appears to be a straightforward game in the sense that the rules are quick and easy, there is plenty to learn when it comes to strategy and tactics. You can be up and running in minutes, but it will take hours of playing and making mistakes before you are confident enough to broadcast challenges on the *Conquest* server. However, it's not a game that will set Trekkies alight and it's much too slow and shallow to satisfy hardened space strategists.



About to beam up from the home planet.



Battling for control, you have two ships against your opponent's one.

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Innovative control points • Good sound effects • Absorbing gameplay
- DOWNERS Lack of animation and depth • Barely worth the online costs • Too few real strategic choices

64 A mildly interesting blend of Pokémon and space strategy



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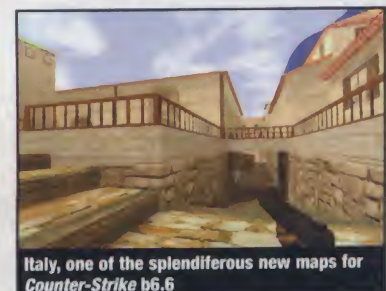
Dustbowl, one of the new maps for *Team Fortress Classic* 1.5. The map needs co-operation from all players to work – no bad thing.



Aha! Got him. That'll teach him etc...



The ghastly new graphical interface. It totally obliterates what's happening on screen.



Italy, one of the splendiferous new maps for *Counter-Strike* b6.6

HALF-LIFE UPDATED

★ www.sierrastudios.com/games/half-life

One of the biggest things to hit the online gaming scene was the recent release of *Half-Life* v1.1 and *TFC* 1.5. Phil Wand finds out what's so brill

If you've played shooters over the Internet, you'll know what a total bitch your latency is. On a standard modem, you'll spend most of your time moonwalking around maps with a 300ms ping, and a whole third of a second delay between you pressing a key and the server receiving, processing and relaying the information. In simpler terms, it makes the game all swimmy and crap.

TEAM FORTRESS 1.5

Imagine the reaction of the online community when Valve Software announced it had completely rewritten its networking code, and had slotted it into *Team Fortress Classic*. Pings were set to tumble, said Valve, and players who had

previously been suffocated by poor connections would be able to frag their way back to the top.

And you know what? It wasn't kidding. Dip into a game on the PC ZONE server and instantly you'll notice most pings are now bobbing around below 200. Those below 100 – real Low Ping Bastard territory – are within the reach of cable modem and ISDN users. Plus there are no more players stalking around maps in slowmo, or dancing a jig in mid air.

Another improvement is smoother graphics. Now when you watch other players doing what they do, their movements are a whole lot more fluid and

indeed seem to incorporate more frames of animation. Drop a backpack of ammo and even here you'll coo-coo at the way the bag arcs gracefully to your feet.

Additionally, there are a number of 'under the hood' tweaks that most people won't know about, including a staggering 97 new console commands, together with the removal of 129 old ones.

Unfortunately, that's where the good news stops. Other so-called 'enhancements' have split the *TFC*

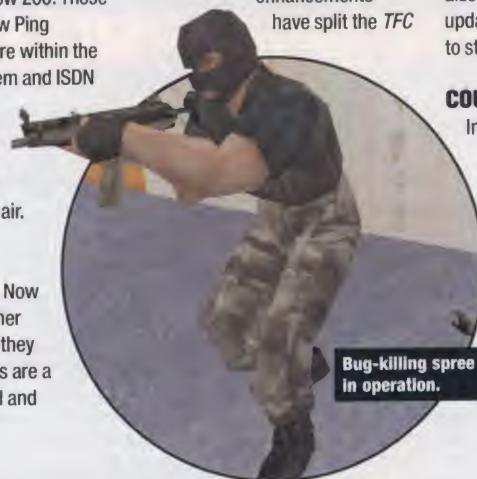
community in two – with the larger of the two camps defecting to rival titles such as *Quake III* *Fortress* and *Unreal Tournament*. Much of the problem has centred around the way Valve has fiddled with the core gameplay. It has added a raft of pointless new features, taken out key elements from the previous version, and slotted in a glossy new interface which is almost as distracting as having someone nail tacks into your head while you play. It was also full of bugs, and an additional update from Valve was released to stop players exploiting them.

COUNTER-STRIKE 6.6

In among a slew of new features (including the ghastly interface) are numerous bugs, including glitches that render some maps unplayable. For example, members of the opposing team often adopt your team's appearance, making it impossible to know who

to shoot. It's also quite common to see people dashing around as bright orange Gordon characters from vanilla *Half-Life*. We've also experienced a problem where it was difficult to purchase new items, even though you were standing in the buy zone right at the start of the game.

The developers have also modified many of the more popular weapons, such as the Colt M4A1 Carbine, which no longer has a zoom, and the MP5 Navy, which now couldn't shoot holes in a box of Shreddies. Ah well. [X]



Bug-killing spree in operation.

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Networking rewrite makes a stunning difference • Spectator mode

• New maps

DOWNERS Core gameplay changed

• Buggy as Maine in July

73 The new Net code rocks. But that's about it

NEW

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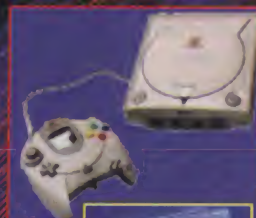
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DOWNLOAD MANAGERS

SOFTWARE
ROUND UP

As files get bigger, grabbing them has become a whole lot trickier.

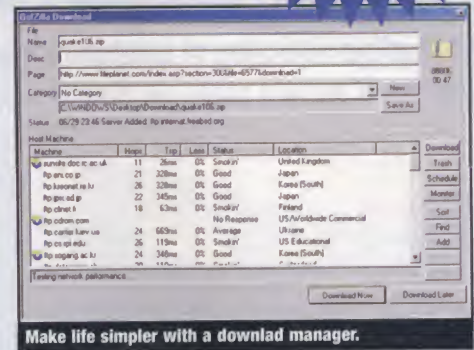
Phil Wand looks at four products that take the load out of downloading

Download managers are the business. Whether you're grabbing the latest *Soldier of Fortune* demo (95Mb), or the most recent *Half-Life* update (1Mb), they're the perfect way to ensure that all the data arrives intact – and in the shortest possible time.

Clever features, such as the ability to store different file types in various locations automatically or to look for files you request on faster sites, mean all you need to worry about is clicking on links in your browser.

Although, the best bit of all is you don't need to stop and wait for files to finish arriving. New links are put into a queue and can be downloaded sequentially, in batches, or at a specific time – for example, on the following weekend when calls are cheaper.

There are a number of download managers now available, and most of them are supported by advertising, so you don't have to pay. If you haven't got one installed, you really are missing out.



Make life simpler with a download manager.

REVIEWS

GO!ZILLA 3.5

OUR
CHOICE

Arguably the best and most popular download manager available, Go!Zilla has all the features you need to get your files in the shortest time. Click on a link in your browser, or drag and drop files into the main screen, and Go!Zilla adds it to your grab bag. Automatically searching across mirror sites around the globe, the program makes sure you get top transfer rates and automatically swaps sites if one times out. You also get Leech Files, which allows you to suck in all the available downloads from Web pages without having to click on the links one by one. It can also monitor your favourite files for updates, search for a file, organise your downloads into categories and it even provides specialised online content through Go!Zilla channels.

Who: Aureate Media
Where: www.gozilla.com
Pros: Unintrusive • Easy to use • Mirror search • Auto virus checking • Free
Cons: Needs updating
Score: ★★★★★

GETRIGHT 4.2

We've never got along with GetRight. Although it offers near identical features to arch rival Go!Zilla, and throws segmented downloads into the bargain, the program's interface and icons look as if they were designed in the dark. Combine this with the fact that it failed to pick up our

clicks in Internet Explorer, and you'll understand why it's not our favourite downloader. However, you can still drag and drop your URLs onto the GetRight main window, copy and paste them via the clipboard, and also browse sites using the GetRight Browser (a slicker rendition of the Leech Files feature in Go!Zilla). The segmented download feature means your files are split into sections and pulled down from the remote server in threads. For most people, though, this is nonsense.

Who: Headlight Software
Where: www.getright.com
Pros: GetRight Browser • Auto virus checking • Mirror search
Cons: Slow and cluttered interface • Gets out of sync with the browser
Score: ★★★★★

DOWNLOAD ACCELERATOR 3.9

Originally touted as an easy way to speed up your transfers through segmented downloading, Download Accelerator is developing into a fully-fledged download manager. This latest version offers suspend and resume, automatic disconnect, mirror searching for faster servers, and more besides. Our only criticism is that the product's core functionality, segmented downloading, fails to impress just like it fails to impress in GetRight!. However, if feature rich products like Go!Zilla or ReGet! make your head spin, chances are that Download

Accelerator, which is a real breeze to install and use, could be the perfect solution for you.

Who: SpeedBit
Where: www.downloadaccelerator.com
Pros: Simple configuration and interface • Free
Cons: Light on features and documentation • Mirror search is a bit iffy
Score: ★★★★★

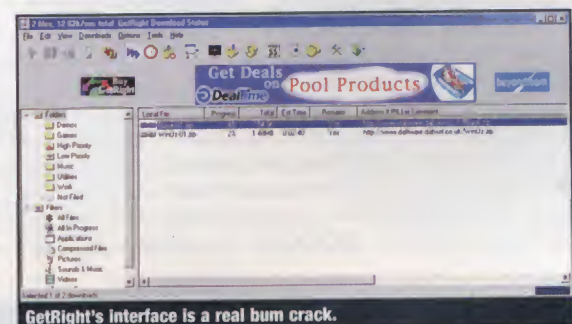
REGET! 1.6

Most download managers go about their business without popping up to ask you questions. This means you just have to punch a link in your browser and the download process is controlled in the background. Sometimes, though, it's nice to do things manually, and after cursing at GetRight's inability to spot our clicks, it's nice to find that ReGet! integrated with our browser's right-click context menu so we could ensure the URLs were passed to it. Like its rivals it has an impressive brace of features including resume broken files and batch transfer; unlike the others it offers nifty tricks such as the ability to shut down your machine after downloading, or assign higher priority to certain files. If it weren't for the fact that it doesn't search mirror sites, something every rival does, it would have achieved a maximum score.

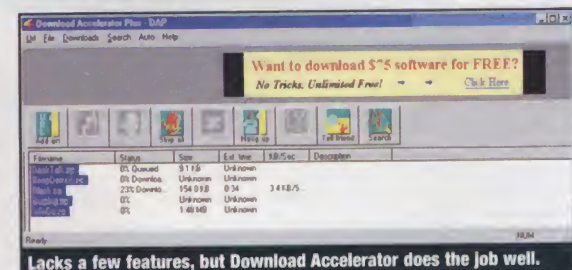
Who: ReGet Software
Where: www.reget.com
Pros: Context menu support • Simple to set up and use • Free
Cons: No support for mirrors
Score: ★★★★★



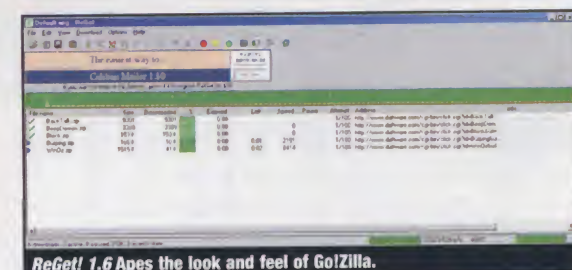
An uncluttered interface makes Go!Zilla feel friendly.



GetRight's interface is a real bum crack.



Lacks a few features, but Download Accelerator does the job well.



ReGet! 1.6 Apses the look and feel of Go!Zilla.

GADGETS

A tempting selection of hardware and other gimmicks for you to spend your hard earned cash on, plus the latest DVD releases...

POO-CHI

£24.99 • Tiger Electronics •
www.tigertoys.co.uk

After the craze that was the Tamogochi, comes the Poo-Chi, a less expensive version of the hi-tech Sony cyber dog. As you might expect, at under £25, it's somewhat limited, but still provides a fun distraction during the working day.

Your Poo-Chi sings six different songs, barks, sits, sleeps, and even reacts differently to loud noises. It also comes with its own bone to play with, and if you get two of these little canines, they'll even take a liking or disliking to each other. How sweet.

Lavish Poo-Chi with affection and let it play with its bone, and it will tell you that it loves you. Ignore it, however, and it becomes sad. Although the bark is somewhat annoying and the songs sound like they're coming out of an internal PC speaker, Poo-Chi does offer some fun for a limited period of time. Kids will love it, and once they get bored, you can put it in a cupboard instead of having to send it to a dogs home. In short, it's a dog that is just for Christmas and not for life. ★★★★★



WINGMAN FORCE FEEDBACK MOUSE

£79.99 • Logitech • 0173 870 900 •
www.logitech.com

The WingMan is presumably intended to give the same sort of feedback gamers have become accustomed to with joysticks and steering wheels but, while both these peripherals are perfectly suited to this technology, the mouse is not, since it is used in many games as a means of navigation for both the games interface and the playing area. The WingMan is lodged on a firm base and you can only move it a very short space in the area surrounding it. This makes precise movement a complete no-no, thus making games like *Half-Life* or *Quake III* a nightmare to play using this device. Even RTS games are a chore with the WingMan, since reaching far areas of the screen in an instant is not possible. While this device certainly has novelty value (the whole office crowded around the desk to have 'a go' on it when it was being tested) it's not a viable option for anyone who is vaguely serious about their games. Even the three games that are bundled with it (*Heavy Gear II*, *Railroad Tycoon*, and *Gruntz*) are not enough to save it from its impending obscurity in the world of PC games. Innovative it may be, but practical it most certainly is not, especially at this price. ★★★★★



DVDS

THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

Certificate: 18

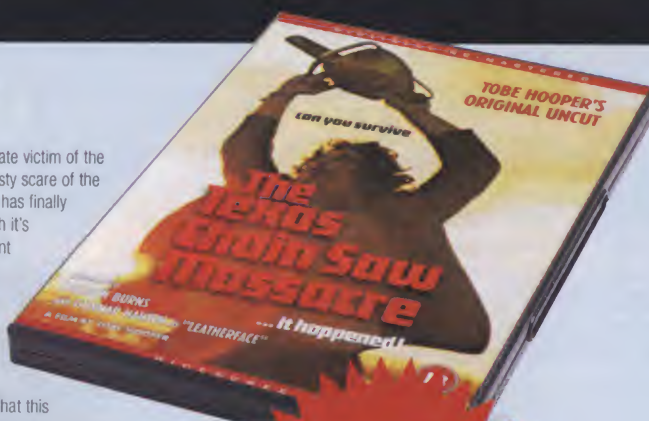
£19.99 • Blue Dolphin • Out now

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre was an unfortunate victim of the hysterical censorship that followed the video-nasty scare of the early '80s, banned for 'moral overtones'. Sense has finally prevailed and a classic is reborn. Funnily enough it's still described by many (even in some very recent reviews) as one of the bloodiest films ever made, which just goes to show that some people still review on reputation.

If you want, we could go deep into the film's philosophy and morality (humans treated like slaughterhouse victims; the vegetarian survivor) but we'd rather just reinforce the fact that this is a classic example of genuine horror. Forget the hype, buy the DVD, try to ignore the obvious flaws and revel in the digitally re-mastered carnage. Oh, and watch out for the head cheese.

Extra Features: Deleted scenes and alternate footage, bloopers reel, original theatrical trailers, original TV ads, sequel trailers, stills posters and lobby cards.

★★★★★



LARRY SANDERS: THE BEST EPISODES

Certificate: 15

£19.99 • Columbia TriStar Home Video • Out now

Forget *Seinfeld*, *Cheers* and even *Frasier*. For those in the know, *The Larry Sanders Show* was the best US sitcom export, despite attempts by the head of BBC comedy to bury it deep in the graveyard shift. This disc sports seven episodes (including one exclusive to DVD) filled with acid sound bites, paranoid delusions, office politics and good old-fashioned back-stabbing. Unlike other characters in networked sitcoms, Larry Sanders has a foul mouth and canned laughter is strictly banned. Laugh? I nearly bought a TV licence.

Extra Features: The *What Planet Are You From?* trailer.

★★★★★



**DVD
OF THE MONTH**

OUTRAGEOUS SOUNDMASTER MP3

£30 • Absolute Multimedia • 01635 278587 • www.absolutemm.com

For the past couple of years, the Internet has been awash with MP3 files. In fact, after sex and Pamela Anderson we'd wager that MP3s are the most searched-for item on the Web. To cash in on the popularity, several companies have released MP3 players, which enable you to download tracks from your PC and pretend you've got a Walkman.

There are two problems. Firstly, you can only download a limited number of tracks and you can't change these until you get back to your PC. Secondly, there's the prohibitive cost, with certain players weighing in at well over £100. These problems aren't solved satisfactorily by the tiny SoundMaster. For a start the player is dirt cheap (£30), although, this is a bit misleading as you need to a memory card and a standalone writer as well in order to get any tracks across. You can expect to pay about £55 for these, making a more worrying total of £85, which still leaves you with a gadget that can hold less than a CD's worth of music. For that you can get a stunning portable CD player with much higher sound quality. You do the maths. ★★★★★

**DU-R100 USB PC RADIO**

£35 • D-Link • 0208 235 5555 • www.dlink.co.uk

Tired of your ageing CD collection? Whack this radio into a spare USB hub and you can access any FM station through your PC. Dressed up in cod iMac clothing, it's small enough to sit comfortably on top of your monitor, and there's a detachable antennae that plugs in the top. Power is provided through the USB hub, so there's no need for a bulky adapter.

Thanks to the wonders of USB, it's a piece of piss to install, which is a good job seeing as we weren't provided with a manual either in the box or on the CD. The only tricky bit is guessing which hole in your soundcard you need to connect up. (It's a good idea to turn the volume down before you experiment with this, as we found after crawling under the desk and being deafened by white noise at top volume. We've still got the bump to prove it.)

It does beg the question, why not just buy a transistor radio instead? One you can take into weddings when there's an important footie match on? No reason really, although you can use your PC to record radio programmes direct into MP3 format. All in all, it's just another gadget. ★★★★★

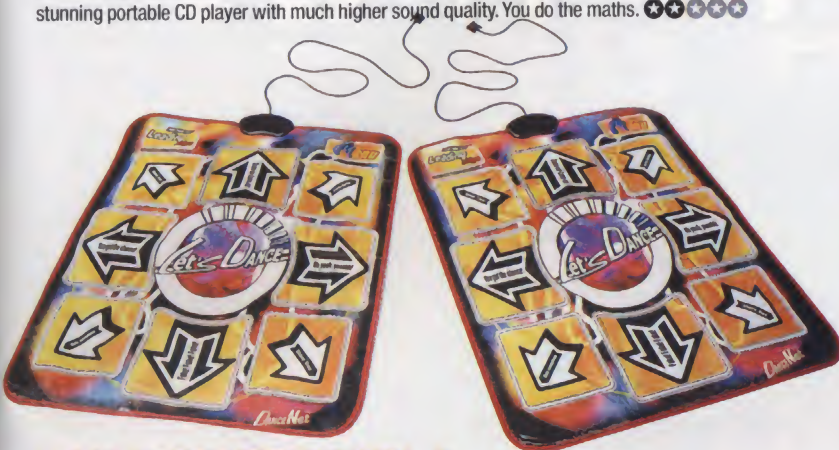
**LET'S DANCE EUROPE VOL. 1**

£59.95 • Dancing Edge • 01889 562726 • www.dancingedge.co.uk

Japanese people are going mad for concept games at the moment. The arcades are filled with games where you have to fish, shake maracas or scratch your way to victory (with decks, you fool.) One of the biggest, though, is the dancing game, aka Twister updated for the 21st Century, which is now available in this country.

The idea is simple enough: connect the mat to your PC and tread on the relevant pads as dictated by the software and the music. It's hard to describe, but it's a bit like *Tetris*; miss steps and you're penalised until the screen's filled and your game's over. You can even buy an extra mat and play Vs games, where correct steps push penalties onto your dancing partner.

At first you'll have no idea what you're doing – although you'll be acutely aware that you look like a twat – but after a few games, it's second nature. Ridiculously entertaining, especially for spectators, but we know the British are far too reserved to don their dancing shoes. ★★★★★

**MYSTERY MEN**

Certificate: PG

£19.99 • Columbia TriStar Home Video • Out now

Apparently you'll either love or hate this spoof on super heroes. We couldn't care either way. There's no denying the superb cast, including Ben Stiller, the intelligent script, or the puerile humour but two hours of it battered us into submission. If the idea of The Blue Raja (he throws forks don't you know?) or The Spleen ('his power is pure flatulence') tickles your fancy then this comedy will hit the mark. Otherwise seek out your thrills elsewhere.

Extra Features: Deleted scenes (19 mins), theatrical trailer, music highlights, production notes and cast and filmmakers' notes.

★★★★★

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Certificate: 18

£19.99 • MGM • Out now

Featuring one of the most memorable soundtracks ever made and a curious mix of dubbed Italian actors and American stars, Sergio Leone's *al dente* spaghetti western closes the trilogy which was started by *A Fist Full Of Dollars* and *For A Few Dollars More*. Quentin Tarantino cites all these movies as heavy influences on his work, and you can certainly see why. Despite the arid landscapes and the unwashed gunslingers, this perfectly paced tale really is the epitome of cool.

Extra Features: US trailer and unseen, undubbed scenes

★★★★★

DEEP BLUE SEA

Certificate: 15

£19.99 • Warner Bros • Out now

Often described as a cross between the classic thrillers *Aliens* and *Jaws*, the mixed reviews that *Deep Blue Sea* received upon its release don't really do the film justice. Like the genetically modified sharks that infest it, the film, which stars Samuel L. Jackson and Saffron Burrows, is fast, intelligent and unpredictable. Underwater thrills have never looked so spectacular.

Extra Features: Commentaries from the director Renny Harlin and Samuel L. Jackson, deleted scenes and documentaries.

★★★★★



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SWAT THE DIFFERENCE

★ RAMBLING Mark Hill



I was playing *SWAT 3* last weekend, which is without doubt one of the most realistic games I've ever played. After being stuck on the same

mission for hours, I was so overjoyed when I completed it I turned the PC off and celebrated by running around my room in slow motion, arms aloft with a stupid grin on my face. Stupid being the operative word here - I forgot to save. The next time I played, I realised my folly and had no choice but to dig out some cheats. Along with the usual level-skipping there were a load of now common 'wacky cheats', such as turning rats rabid, running the game in slow 'John Woo' motion, or the old fave, making your *SWAT* team semi-naked. I could have done without that last one, but the point (yes, there is one) is that the reality of games is totally malleable. The boundary between the often praised realism and delirious fantasy is but a string of code away. Just a thought.

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

118 CHEAT MASTER

When in doubt, you may as well just cheat. The master, Keith Pullin, shows you the way.

119 DEAR KEITH

Are you throwing your keyboard at the wall, tearing your hair out and generally just driving yourself insane with a gaming problem? Then turn to Uncle Keith for some top tips.

120 STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER

Martin Korda gathers up all the strength the Force has to offer in an effort to guide you gallantly through the game that is *Force Commander*.

124 SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

Gather your troops and get ready to conquer as Mark Hill shows you the way in this month's super strategy guide.

128 DEAR WANDY

Need to find a solution to a niggling technical pain? Our resident techie Wandy is here to help.

130 WATCHDOG

If you're having troubles dealing with a pesky PC company and can't get any answers, then let the consumers' champion Adam Phillips guide you through your legal rights...

YOUR HOSTS



Adam Phillips



Keith Pullin



Martin Korda

CHEAT MASTER

When everyone's laughing at you, there's only one thing to do - cheat

★ CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD



More cheats, tips and solutions on the cover CD this month. Find out

what's in store by looking at the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser.

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/Cheat Master, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, W1

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with Dear Keith or Cheat Master in the subject line.

GROUND CONTROL

Sierra

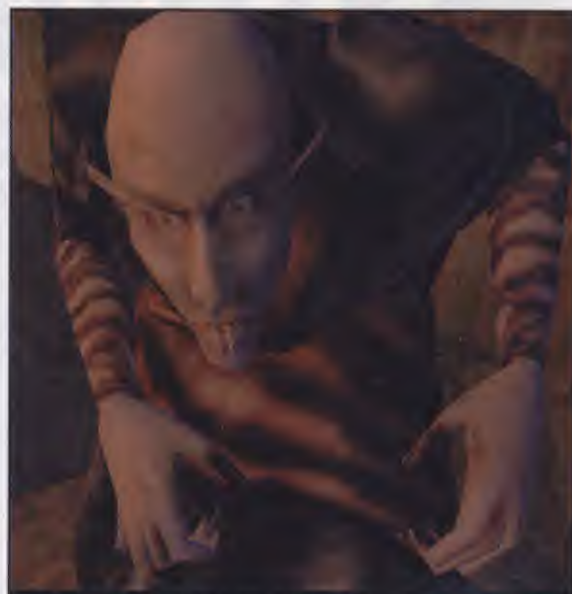
Press the 'M, S and V' keys on the title screen. Now type in the following codes:

console Press '~' to activate console
god God mode on all friendly units
notgod Disable God mode
gimme maps Play all campaign missions in Custom Game menu
flashlight Flashlight mode
from massive with love Weird landscape textures
the new generation of rts-games Play a secret sabotage mission in Custom Game menu

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE

Activision

First of all start the game with the '-console' parameter. For example, 'C:\Vampire\vampire.exe -console'. Then start a single-player game, and press '~' to activate the console. Now type in these codes: (NB cheats can be used on any character in the game, just click on them with the mouse before activating the console.)



This is what you'll look like if you cheat too often. That, and you'll go blind.

god 0/1	1: God mode on, 0: God mode off	whereis	Location stats
revive	Full health and resurrect dead characters	frenzyme	Sends Christ off into a wild frenzy
xp x	Add x experience points	maxfps x	Set framerate to x
cash x	Gives x cash	shapeshift x	Shapeshift into x
dropcash x	Drops x cash	shapeshift	Return to normal
freeammo	Infinite ammo	freeze	No animation
freecasting	Cast disciplines without blood	pause	Pause
ai	Disables AI for friendlies and enemies	resume	Resume
addalldisciplines x	Increases all disciplines to x	emit x	Emit x (ie gas)
vault	Open personal vault	jump x	Jump to following levels
adding x	Spawn item		
stakme	Stake yourself		
killme	Irreversible death		
totals	List current info		
advancement	display advancement window		
framerate 0/1	1: show, 0: don't show		
poisonme	Poison yourself		
disease	Disease yourself		
damage me	Damage yourself		

To jump to a specific waypoint on a level add a number after the code (for example, 'Jump Convent 2'):

Convent	ConventDay
OldTownDay	SmithyDay
Inn4StagsDay	JudithBridgeDay
University	StThomas
GoldenLaneDay	UnornaDay
EastGate	EastGateNight
OldTown	Smithy
Inn4Stags	JudithBridge
Unorna	Haven
PetrinHill	PetrinHillDay
AnezkaRoom	NQuarter
PragueCastle	PrinceBrandl
GoldenLane	
DummyNorth Quarter	
DummyNorthGate	
DummyNorth Quarter Gate	

SilverMines SilverMines2
SilverMines3 SilverMinesNight
Monastery Monastery2
Monastery3 ArdanChantry
ArdanChantry2 ArdanChantry3
ArdanChantry4 JosefTunnels
JosefTunnels2 JosefTunnels3
VysMountain

EARTH 2150**Mattel Interactive**

Press 'Enter', type in 'I_wanna_cheat', then hit Enter again:

x-mas_pack Full repair and reload on all units
fireworks Lay down mines
Armageddon Start meteor shower
the_hammer_of_thor Kill all nearby enemies
massacre Kill everything nearby
let_be_darkness Fog
no_more_secrets Show entire map
no_one_hides See all units
eagle_eye See everything
see_you_next_life Self-destruct selected Unit
hasta_la_vista_enemigos Kill all visible units
bad_time_bad_place Damage all visible units
I_love_this_game_x Give x credits
I_hate_limits_x Unit limit is x
einstein_0/1 Fast explore (0=off, 1=on)
help_me_please!!! 0/1 Fast explore player (0=off, 1=on)

DAIKATANA**Eidos Interactive**

Load the game with the '+set console 1' command line parameter. During the game press '~' to display the console, and type 'cheats on' to enable the cheat mode.

Enter the following codes:

god God mode
weapon_give_(1-10) Weapon select
level_massacre Kill all monsters
notarget Invisible
map (level name) Level select
cam_toggle Cycle between three camera modes
cam_nextmon Camera targets next monster
cam_nextmon Cycle through all characters on level
cam_nextsidekick Cycle through all sidekicks on level
screenshot Take screenie
timescale (speed) Change speed (default=1.0)
bind (key and command) Key command binding
noclip No clipping
connect (server) Select active server

developer (1 or 0) Toggle engine messages
flushmap (1 or 0) Toggle clean map load with no caching
r_speeds (1 or 0) Toggle rendering speed display
r_drawflat (1 or 0) Toggle flat-shaded polygons
r_fullbright (1 or 0) Toggle lightmaps on surfaces
cheats 0 Disable cheats

FLYING HEROES**Take 2 Interactive**

Type any of these codes during the game and cheat until your little heart's content:

anamiluf full mana
htlaehiluf full health
ommaluf full ammo
tsooberif fire boost
duolchtaed death cloud
elbisivni invisible
erifilaf fallfire
hsalf flash
kaolc cloak
llaberif fireball
llabeci iceball
lerrabsag gas barrel
nlardica acid rain

PHONE FOR HELP

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noddegamra armageddon
ratslatem metal star
retropelet teleporter
senimex xemines
senimga agmines

MDK2**Interplay**

During the game press '~'

and enter the following

codes after the 'Omen'

prompt:

mdkGobSetDamageFilter

(mdkGetPlayerGob(),0) Invulnerable

Jump to a level...

mdkNewGame(1,12) Level 1

mdkNewGame(2,12) Level 2

mdkNewGame(3,12) Level 3

mdkNewGame(4,12) Level 4

mdkNewGame(5,11) Level 5

mdkNewGame(6,8) Level 6

mdkNewGame(7,11) Level 7

mdkNewGame(8,8) Level 8

mdkNewGame(9,13) Level 9

mdkNewGame(10,7) Level 10

mdkNewGame(11,1) Level 10 #1 (special)

mdkNewGame(12,1) Level 10 #2 (special)

GodDebugToggle() God mode on/off

DEAR KEITH

Keith Pullin brings hope and order to your misguided lives

CONTROL FREAK

Q What a great game, yet what an incredibly hard one too! I refer to *Ground Control*, of course, and I have a question for you. Basically, I want to know whether it's possible to control the allied troops who come to assist you on some of the missions?

Ian Hill, Bath

A No, you can't actually control these troops directly. However, their intelligence is such that they tend to move to areas where they're needed the most anyway. To be perfectly honest I wouldn't think about them too much, they know what to do – and they do it well.

CRUEL SUMMER

Q Why is the world so cruel to me? Oh, poor me. I'm totally arse at *FA Premier League Stars*. Are there any cheats that can improve my uncoordinated fumbings? All I want is 11 world-class players and a ten goal head start. Is this possible?

Matt Smith, Coalville

A Luckily, you've come to the right place. Start a new season and enter your name as 'Goalrush Utd' – this gives you a six goal lead and 1,000

stars. If that's not good enough for you, give up.

NOW YOU SEE HER...

Q Some friends of mine say that you can get Lara to explode on *Tomb Raider 3*. Is this really true? If it is, please tell me how to do it.

Sara Pitt, Farnham

A Sure, it's true. Just draw your pistols (or shotgun), then step back, step forward, crouch, stand, spin three times and jump forward. Bang goes Lara. Happy?

ZIP IT

Q I'm currently plodding through *Total Annihilation* but I seem to be stuck on mission ten of the ARM campaign. The problem seems to be that an air strike wipes me out as soon as I move my units. Is this a bug or have I missed the point somewhere?

Pete Fish, IoW

A This is no bug, Pete: the trouble is you're moving your Zippers. As soon as they leave the upper left corner of the map the enemy calls in the air strike. So just leave them there and progress onwards through the maze with the remainder of your units.

Oh, and another top tip on this level is make the most of Defender units; they have excellent ground and air coverage – exactly what you need on this level.

ALIEN LIFE

Q Turn-based strategy games eat away my life, but that doesn't stop me wanting to know everything about them. On that note, I'd like you to please tell me how I can get the secret Firaxian faction on *Alpha Centauri: Alien Crossfire*. Thanks.

Alan Chadon, Liverpool

A You really should try and infiltrate real life more often, Alan. Anyway, go into the Faction Editor, select 'Open' and type 'sid'. Now click 'Save' and save the file as 'sid'. Finally, click 'Add Faction' to create the secret Firaxian faction.

POSH MOTOR

Q I'm playing *TOCA 2* on the hardest level and I don't seem to be doing as well as I was on the easier settings. Talk about tough – I get kicked out of virtually every race for being so crap. Do you have any cheats or hints that might make things a bit easier for me?


Ash Court, Brighton

A There is one way. When you start a new championship type 'poshkid' as your name, listen for Tiff, then type your driver's name in again. Begin the season and no matter how badly you play, you'll never be kicked out again.

HIGH HOPES

Q I'm flummoxed, bamboozled and confused on *MDK2*. Do I qualify for some help? My problem is trying to have that boss bloke on level six, checkpoint E. I've tried shooting him with everything I've got, I've even tried leaping on top of him, but that still doesn't work. Just what the flaming hell am I doing wrong here? Please help me.

Neil Harte, Luton

A Firstly, you need to use the Plutonium to turn into Hyde Hawkins. You can now climb the tallest stack of crates and jump onto the BFB when he gets close enough. That damages him quite a bit, and if you jump on him three times the force field disappears. Unfortunately, this initialises a barrage of 'left brain attacks'. Dodge these where possible and use Mr Fizzys to restore health if you get low. To finish him off once and for all use the Atomic Toaster. Easy, kind of... 

STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER

WALKTHROUGH

Harnessing The Force, *Martin Korda* guides you through the strategic intricacies needed to complete *Force Commander*

★ **REVIEWED** PCZ #89 **SCORE** 81%

ASSAULT ON RUUL: PART 1

Take the bunker to the north of your starting point. Get an auto turret generator. Fire at the enemy troop carrier which appears and then take out the troops that jump out of it. Build some turrets around the area, mainly infantry ones. Call down some ST-PTs and AT-STs. Place them near the bunker. Form an assault team and send them northwards. Take the supply bunker you come across.

Call some AT-PTs and stormtroopers. Send them east and you'll get to a mining structure, which you must take. Create another attack group and move it to your bunker in the north. Take your AT-PTs and AT-STs north, avoiding the turret as you go. Take out any resistance that you come across. Take over the turret that you passed a moment ago.

Go back to the Command Center and build up a group of AT-STs and AT-PTs. Use the edge of the canyon to the north to lead you east. Take out the troop turrets with your AT-PTs and then take over anti-vehicle turrets. Man the turrets. Go back east with your troops.

Take all your vehicles, bar a couple to defend your base, and send them to the supply bunker you captured earlier. Don't forget to take Dellis as well. Capture the other supply bunker you find. Take out the infantry turrets with your vehicles. Go south and take out the Rebel Command Center there. Capture the computer complex by taking out any resistance and sending in Dellis.

ASSAULT ON RUUL: PART 2

Call down some AT-STs, along with stormtroopers and troop

carriers. Keep Dellis in your Command Center after setting up a beacon. Get an auto-turret generator. Defend the base from all attacks. Build some turrets around your base. Go west with half of your troops and capture the bunker you find. Buy some more AT-PTs and AT-STs. Send them west until you get to another bunker. Capture it and reinforce it with extra troops.

Explore the map with speeder bikes. Once you've uncovered as much of the map as possible, get together a group of AT-STs and AT-PTs and take the mining structure. Now quickly call down several AT-STs and send them (along with some AT-PTs) to the right of the mining structure. Use these units to take out the turrets near the communication building. Call down some more AT-PTs and extract Dellis from your Command

Center. Move him and some AT-PTs carefully up the right-hand side of the canyon and place a number of beacons. Use AT-PTs to guard the beacons from enemy attacks. Once all the beacons have been placed, you've completed the mission.

CRISIS ON SARAPIN: PART 1

Get together some AT-PTs, AT-STs and stormtroopers. Take out the

Train yourself up in the Desert Training mission.



airspeeders. Call an auto-turret generator and some speeder bikes. Take a group of AT-PTs north. Head east with your AT-AA and troop carrier. Use the AT-STs and turrets to defend the base. Buy some more speeder bikes.

Man the speeder bikes and go northwest to the Rebel base. Storm the base and get your stormtroopers into the turrets and Command Center. Once you have control, return to your base. Get a group of AT-STs, AT-PTs and AT-AAs together and capture the collection facility to the north. Take Dellis to this position.

Call some AT-STs and speeder bikes and send them to the Rebel base. Take the turrets and attack

ASSAULT ON RUUL: PART 2



AT-STs and stormtroopers are among your most agile units.

CRISIS ON SARAPIN: PART 1



Capture enemy Command Centers to increase your flow of command points.

THE TRAP AT YAVIN 4



Sending out scout probes can be invaluable in pinpointing enemy units.

the airfield. Now capture the Command Center, replacing lost units if need be. Take the energy collectors. Get some AT-STs and AT-PTs from your base. Take out the turrets to the north. Then capture the energy collector. Take some troops from the Rebel Command Center and head east. Capture the energy collector there. Take Dellis to all of the energy collectors. Before sending Dellis into the last energy collector that you capture, move all your troops away from the first one you captured.

CRISIS ON SARAPIN: PART 2

Get a group of AT-PTs, AT-STs and AT-AAs together. Get an auto-turret generator and build some turrets around your base. Take half your forces northwest and take out any rebel troops as you go. Capture the energy collector east from here. Go to the southwest where you can capture another one. Order some more AT-PTs, AT-AAs and AT-STs. Send them east. Take out the airfield to the southeast.

Build a flight control building and a landing platform. Purchase some TIE fighters. Take out the rebel units near the drill with the TIE fighters. Take your group of

AT-PTs and AT-AAs to the middle of the map and capture another energy collection facility. After this, take out the rebel troops on the volcano. While this battle rages, capture the drilling platform with some stormtroopers and then send in Dellis.

Send your TIE fighters to reconnoitre the enemy base. Take out the turrets and Command Center with them, calling in more TIE fighters if need be. Because you can still build troops, it's only a matter of time until you overrun the enemy base.

THE TRAP AT YAVIN 4

Build up a group of AT-PTs, AT-STs, AT-AAs and stormtroopers, along with mobile artillery units and an auxiliary control. Send out a probe droid and scout to the west. Head north with your MAUs and half of your other forces and take out all rebel resistance. Send the probe droid north again. When you see the enemy turrets, use your MAUs to take them out. Then find the airfield and take it out.

Order down an air control building and a landing platform. Build TIE fighters, scout with them and take out as many enemy units as possible,



AT-PTs, unlike its counterparts, the AT-STs, won't last very long in intense combat situations.

especially near Colonel Veer's location. Pick up the Colonel in an AT-ST.

Go back to the airfield you destroyed earlier. Reinforce your attack group if it has become depleted. Take out anti-vehicle turrets and the shield generator. Take out any remaining anti-aircraft turrets and then send in the TIE fighters to scout out the rest of the area. Take out the Rebel Command Center. Clear the path to the landing site with the TIE fighters and then send the Colonel in his AT-ST to the landing site. Get him out and send him to it on foot.

THE BATTLE OF HOTH

Get a force of AT-AAs, AT-PTs and mobile artillery units together. Take out the Tauntauns as soon as they appear. Head northeast. It's

extremely important to remember that you only have the units you start with in this mission, so don't be wasteful.

Destroy the enemy base's turrets and generator. Capture the Rebel Command Center. Send Vader into the base.

SURPRISE AT ENDOR

Beware of the Ewok traps in this mission. Head north through the forest. Use your AT-STs to take out the Ewok catapult and your stormtroopers to take out the Ewoks. Then take out all the buildings. Go south and take out the Ewoks, their catapult and the buildings. Head west and do the same again. Set up the shield generator in the site nominated by General Bashin.



Beware of Sand People on the Hills.

THE MASSACRE AT ABRIDON: PART 1

Group together some AT-AAs, AT-STs, mobile artillery units and stormtroopers. Head south to the Rebel base. Take out the turrets with your artillery. Capture the Rebel Command Center and hospital. Order an Auxiliary Control and defend the base at all costs. Send a probe droid to scout round the map. When you find the shield generator, destroy it with your MAUs. Now find turrets and the Rebel Airfield with your droid. Again, use the MAUs to take them out. Direct your probe droid southwest until it finds the Rebel base. Take out the resistance and capture the Command Center. Go northwest and when you come to the bridge, scout across it first and then take out the enemy with your artillery. Attack the Government Center taking out the turrets first. Capture the Government Center.

THE MASSACRE AT ABRIDON: PART 2

Select your most experienced and powerful units and get yourself an Air Control Building. Guard your Command Center at all costs and be careful of the heavy enemy



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THE RUUL MISSIONS: PART 1



Always bring down plenty of reinforcements, particularly in the later missions.

THE ALLIANCE STRIKES BACK



The Ewok's primitive weapons are surprisingly effective against Imperial AT-STs.

← attacks from the north. Once you've fended off the attacks, bolster your diminished forces and build turrets to protect your buildings. Take half of your forces west, use an AT-ST to pick up the dignitary. Take them back to your base. Capture the bunkers. Send a probe droid north and then follow the mountains east. Once you see the Rebel base, take out the turrets from afar with your MAUs. Using your AT-AT to take out the remaining turrets, launch an assault on the enemy

base. Explore the rest of the map and send any dignitaries you find back to your base. Go to the east of the map and into the town there, where you'll find Luke Skywalker. Return to your base and herd your captives into the Star Destroyer.

THE MASSACRE AT ABRIDON: PART 3

Head west and link up with Colonel Tulon. Take out all of the

Rebels that you come across. Form a group of AT-AAs, AT-STs and mobile artillery units. Follow the road downwards and cross the bridge. Take out the nearby Rebel tanks. Keep going down until you get a message.

You must now stop Tulon's AT-AT. Gather together as many AT-STs as you can. Now give chase. If you're attacked, try to use your artillery and other units which are not chasing the AT-AT to destroy the attackers. Don't use the AT-STs, which must not stop until they get to Tulon. When you catch him up, take him out.

Return to the other units and go west. Use your stormtroopers to capture the bunker on the far west side of the map. Hold this position against Rebel attacks. After this, get to the road south of you and head west to the scanner-jammer. Take it out. To launch an attack on the Rebel base, send in your heavy units first to take out the infantry turrets and then distract the other rebel units while you capture the anti-vehicle turrets. Take out the shield generator. Using the turrets you captured earlier as cover, take out the airfield with your artillery.

Call in reinforcements. Go east and capture the anti-vehicle turrets. Use the same tactics as you used with the first Rebel base to catch this one.

ESCAPE FROM KALAAN

Find the ten stormtroopers with a yellow tinge. Send Brenn into the TR-MB. Use your stormtroopers to capture the anti-vehicle turrets. Liberate Skywalker from the nearby Command Center and send him into the TR-MB. Take out the mobile artillery unit with your stormtroopers. Rendezvous with the Kalaanites and use them to

capture the enemy turrets one by one. Use the turrets to gain control of the crossroads you come to, by using them against the enemy troops. Work your way up the canyon using the Kalaanites to take each of the turrets consecutively. Now get to the evacuation point.

THE RUUL MISSIONS: PART 1

Rescue the prisoners and recruit some Ruulian rebels. Call for reinforcements, namely units with grenade launching capabilities. Rescue the Ruulian official who is being escorted by stormtroopers. Once again, call down reinforcements and hide your troops as the Imperial escort moves past you. Then use grenades from the rear to take them out. When Tulon defects, take him away from the battle. If need be, send in some troops to cause a diversion as you do this. Now get Tulon to the excavation area as quickly as possible.

THE RUUL MISSIONS: PART 2

Stock up on heavy troopers and use Tulon to recruit Ruulian rebels. Your forces will come under attack, so weather the storm. Take your troops to the middle of the map and find the hijacked vehicles. Once you've joined with the Ruulians, return to the TR-MB. Call down plenty of reinforcements.

Following the upper edge of the map, send your men into the first base you come across and capture the turrets. Get the Command Center in the same way. Head south to the next base. Again capture the turrets, but expect heavy losses. Capture the anti-vehicle turrets guarding the computer complex and then capture the main building. Set up a ring of defence and then send Tulon into the complex.

THE WALKER GAMBIT: PART 1

Form a squad of infiltrators, some heavy troopers and a medical droid. Set up the defences for your base and then bring down several Y-wing fighter craft. Defend your base against all attacks, calling in reinforcements when the need arises. Afterwards, scout the map with your fighters. Head down the map with some troops and then turn east where you'll find anti-aircraft turrets, which you can capture or destroy. Use the cleared path to get your Y-wings to attack nearby enemy forces. Stop the AT-ATs with the Y-wings (use their ion cannons), and then capture them with infiltrators.

THE WALKER GAMBIT: PART 2

Make sure you look after Tulon and your infiltrators. Defend your base from the waves of enemies who attack it. Before this battle is over, make sure your air defences are set up to take out the TIE fighters that attack you. When the AT-AT force attempts to storm your base, take out the AT-AA, then use the Y-wings to take out the other units. Capture the AT-ATs with your infiltrators.

Head west with your AT-ATs and take out the turrets. Then take out the enemy units. Follow the path and take out the platform with your fighters. In the northwest of the map, take out the turret control centre. Using your Y-wings as your main source of attack, take the base and the ion cannon.

REDEMPTION AT ABRIDON

Get together plenty of attack tanks and set them up to guard your base. Hold off the enemy attacks. Bring in an airfield and build some Y-wings. Use your fighters to scout the map. You can also use your scanner-jammer for this. When you uncover the

Ⓢ Even though the AT-ATs are hugely powerful, they can be easily captured with Infiltrators.

enemy bases, hit them with long-range torpedoes. In the southeast is another base with a landing platform. Bomb this with your Y-wings. Capture the Command Center. Reinforce your defences for the impending enemy onslaught. When you find the second enemy base, take out all anti-aircraft turrets and AT-AAs with missiles, then send in your Y-wings. Take some infiltrators and rescue the hostages at the prison camp using the Y-wings to take out any resistance before you move in.

REDEMPTION AT ABRIDON

Start off with a relatively small force then build it up once you've landed. Get out into the open. Go via the park to the T-junction. Use your infiltrators to capture the enemy artillery. Get to the shipyard and unload the pilots and capture the shipyard building. Bring in heavy reinforcements and defend your position from the Imperial attack.

There's an enemy base with a hospital to the east, so take out this building first with long-range missiles. Send in some units to reconnoitre the base and then use your missiles to take out the building you find. Now go and do the same with the base to the west. Use your scanner-jammer to uncover the airfield and take it out with missiles before launching a full attack on the base.

THE ALLIANCE STRIKES BACK

Head west and get some Ewoks. Use the gliders to take out the AT-STs. Head east with your troops. Follow the side of the map north. Get some more Ewoks together. Go northeast to the village. Take the bikes. Send Leia northwest and gather more Ewoks. Go back to the village. Take Han Solo northeast with a

large contingent of men to the shield generator. Take out the AT-STs with the Ewok catapults. Use Han Solo to blow up the bunker. When the AT-ATs attack, distract them while getting Chewbacca to one of the AT-ATs. Use him to capture it. Use it to destroy all of your attackers. Take the AT-AT and some infiltrators and go to the Tydirium. Go northwest from here with all your troops. Use your infiltrators to capture the other AT-AT. Go around the rest of the maps with your AT-ATs and take out all of the remaining enemy units.

THE SIEGE OF CORUSCANT: PART 1

Take out the group of Imperial units to the east, using long-range missiles. Use your infiltrators to capture the antennas. Head for the centre of the map. When you near the Command Center, use your tank's missiles to take out the turrets, or if you prefer, use infiltrators to capture them instead. Bring down an airfield and stock up on plenty of Y-wings. Defend your base against all attacks and then go scouting with your Y-wings. In the northwest you should find a group of enemy units, which are easily disposed of with your bombers. Then take out the landing site. With air superiority established, use your Y-wings to finish off the Imperial ground forces.

THE SIEGE OF CORUSCANT: PART 2

Stock up on infiltrators and some tanks. Troop carriers and a scanner-jammer will also prove useful. Set up your base defences, making sure you've got anti-aircraft turrets to stop the enemy TIE fighters. Use your infiltrators to capture the AT-ATs. Use your hover tanks to take out any TIE bomber attacks. Use the

scanner-jammer to uncover the anti-aircraft turrets in the city and take them out with long-range missiles. Stock up on Y-wings and fly them into the city to take out the landing sites. Use your captured AT-ATs to knock down the city walls. With your Y-wings in support, capture the required buildings within the city with your infiltrators.

THE SIEGE OF CORUSCANT: PART 3

The Imperial forces will attack your base throughout this mission, so fortifying your base properly is of the utmost importance. Do this with plenty of turrets and make sure you keep calling down reinforcements. Getting some bombers in at this stage is also a good idea. Use infiltrators to capture the advancing AT-ATs. It's best to distract them with an attack while doing this. Once you've steadied the flow, start concentrating your attacks on the enemy Command Centers. Start with the ones closest to you. With several AT-ATs at your disposal, you can build up a formidable strike force. Just make sure you give it plenty of air cover with your Y-wings and that before this happens, you take out the anti-aircraft turrets with your ground forces. When you launch an attack on the palace, take some hover tanks to stop you getting bombed by the TIE bombers.

With a combination of long-range attacks, your AT-ATs' chin guns and Y-wing bombing runs, take out the turrets around the palace. Then take out the landing platforms and use your Y-wings to eliminate any artillery fire. Take out all of the Command Centers. Get rid of the last few turrets. Infiltrate all of the buildings that the mission specifies, with the palace being the last of these, to complete the game. [E]



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THE GATEWAY TO GAMES



SHOGUN TOTAL WAR

STRATEGY GUIDE

Are you struggling to make even partial war in this greatest of strategy games? **Mark Hill** helps you to go total, and then proceeds to dispatch himself with a small sword

★ REVIEWED PCZ #89 SCORE 93%

The combination of turn-based strategy on a Risk-style map and the real-time tactics in massive battles make *Shogun: Total War* a really challenging and rewarding experience. On the following pages we show you some tips and neat little tricks on how to succeed at both, as well as detailing the best troops for your battles.

THE TURN-BASED STRATEGY MAP

★ Alliances are essential at certain points in the game. You're never going to get anywhere if your territory is surrounded by enemies, so you need to get some of them on your side. This also makes it easier to wear down the stronger regions by presenting a united front. Don't try to expand in every possible direction: your resources will be sucked dry and

your army decimated before you know it. Remember, that even though honour is a central to the life of medieval Japan there are some clans that can't be trusted, especially the Takeda clan. If you're forced into an alliance with them due to circumstances beyond your control make sure you keep an eye on them at all times. And keep in mind that you're expected to act honourably, or you'll suffer the consequences.

★ The honour of your generals plays a vital role in successful battles. Always place the ones with the highest honour at the head of your troops as they transmit a bonus to all your soldiers. Because they are so valuable, make sure you protect them at all costs. Conversely, taking out your opponents' generals with high honour can often make a serious dent in the morale of their troops.

★ Concentrate your energies on conquering the territories whose characteristics will aid your campaign. So, for example, if you're short of cash, try and get hold of a wealthy region, such as Musashi. If you're not having much luck with your ninjas try and get hold of Iga, where the finest stealthy assassins are trained.

★ The ninja bonus is not the only one. Many regions have training bonuses specific to the clans that





Try to spot enemy weak points before you start.

control them. Which clan you decide to play with will largely dictate the kind of game you'll play and the kind of troops you'll use. But don't go training mad, your resources will be needed elsewhere.

★ If your regions have access to the sea or rivers always build ports. These allow you to move your troops more quickly from one territory to another. They also have the added advantage of boosting your trade.

★ Try to balance how you spend your resources both internally and externally. It's no use having the greatest army in the world if you haven't got some shinobis to protect your generals.

★ Be clever in your tax settings, you don't want to provoke a revolution by sucking your own people dry. Set the taxes to normal for a few years and drop them as you expand and become richer.

★ When one of your samurais has proven himself repeatedly in battle and reaches a high level of honour you get the chance to build a Sword Dojo (providing you already have a large castle). Build the Dojo immediately — it enables you to create No-Dachi units.

THE REAL-TIME BATTLES

★ Before the battle starts be sure to study the map closely, zooming

around the hills and beyond valleys to get a clear picture of the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches. This way you can also familiarise yourself with all the enemy units and their positions. Remember that you can pause the game at any time and still issue commands, so there's no excuse for not thinking things through before acting.

★ It's absolutely essential to have the right balance of units in your army. You need gunners and archers so you can position them at a distance (ideally on high ground), cavalry units to trample down enemy archers and spearmen to hold strong defensive positions. So don't send thousands of mad monks or samurais on their own or they'll get slaughtered in no time.

★ Forests make a perfect cover for ambushes. Position a heavy number of troops in the woods and send a small unit to attract the enemy. When they go past you can rush them unexpectedly. Forests also provide great cover from arrows and their cavalry won't be able to follow you in.

★ Don't let the enemy get away when they've capitulated and you've won the battle. The best thing is to be completely ruthless and wipe out even the smallest dregs of their army. If you don't,



Remember that scene in *The Good The Bad And The Ugly*?



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There is no charge for playing games on the gameplay site, however you will be responsible for call charges (from 1p per minute)

they will regroup and join the rest of their forces ready for their next attack. The best way to do this is to use your cavalry. They are by far the fastest and easily cut down soldiers who are running away from you.

★ One of the best ways to break down the enemy troops' morale (and thus have them scattering away in surrender) is to find their general and mow him down. You can recognise him by the special standard he carries round, as opposed to the army's flag.

★ As you can imagine, the formation you keep your units in is all-important. If you want to break down a strong defensive barrier choose the wedge formations, but keep in mind that you'll suffer heavy casualties. If, on the other hand, you're defending, the obvious choices are the close formations, which keep all your troops tightly knit but don't allow you much scope for attack.

★ Another basic but powerful tactic is to use the weather to your advantage. Choose a rainy day for battle if you want to neutralise the enemy guns, as the gunpowder gets dampened, and a snowy day if you particularly fear their cavalry, as they are slowed down a lot.

UNIT RUNDOWN

YARI ASHIGARU



These peasant foot soldiers should be out in the fields collecting rice, not going into

bloody thunderous battles. However, armed with their long spears rather than their harvesting scythes, the Yari Ashigaru will often make up the bulk of your army early on in the game. Farmers' lives come cheap, so what they lack in quality can usually be made up by the sheer numbers you can afford. The best way to use them is as a meat shield, drawing all the enemy fire while your better-trained troops hide behind them. Unfortunately, seeing all these peasants slaughtered isn't too good for your army's morale, so it can be a good idea to keep them out of sight.

YARI SAMURAI



A more advanced version of the Ashigaru, the Yari samurai are also armed with long spears, but can handle them better and take more hits due to their improved armour.

They are best used to create a defensive wall, especially against cavalry. Keep musketeers and

archers behind them so they can fire over the samurai without endangering themselves.

NO-DACHI SAMURAI



By far the best foot soldiers available, these lightly armoured samurais wield

a two-handed long sword and can cause devastating damage. They're unbeatable at hand-to-hand combat but their lack of armour means that they usually fall like flies, especially under a shower of arrows. They have high morale, so if you use your general in battle, they won't do a runner. They also come in handy for both quick attacks and ambushes.

WARRIOR MONKS

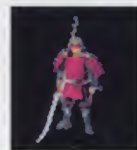


There's no combination more bloody or more violent than the marriage of

religion and war. Perhaps it's the glaze-eyed fanaticism and a complete lack of fear of death, but these God-loving warriors are some of the toughest in the game. Excellent both in defence and attack, they will take absolutely anyone on and will never run away, no matter what the circumstances are. Like any other foot soldier, though, they will suffer heavy casualties under ranged fire. As you'd expect from

such a powerful unit, Warrior Monks don't come cheap, but they're definitely worth the expense.

NAGITANA



One of the strongest units in the game, particularly in defence, the Nagitana

samurais are the perfect soldiers to protect key areas. Don't use them for attack unless you have no other choice as they're too slow and have no attacking bonuses. But stick them on your side of a bridge and the enemy will have to go through hell to get past them. The strategic importance of the Nagitana cannot be overstated, because *Shogun* is as much about cover and protection as it is about assaulting the enemy's army.

SAMURAI ARCHERS



An absolutely essential part of any army, the archers can defend and attack from a

safe distance while the more pedestrian soldiers draw most of the enemy fire. The most effective aspect of the archer's qualities, apart from their range, is that arrows can be shot in a parabola, curving over the heads of your army and up or down hills. Going downhill is the best option as this gives a wider field of fire and the

damage is increased. You need to protect them from the opposition's cavalry, ideally using spearmen to stop them in their tracks. And remember that the archers' ammunition runs out after a while. Luckily, they're also quite handy at hand-to-hand combat when that happens.

ARQUEBUSIERS



Not as effective as you might think, these primitive guns have a low accuracy rating

and only cause real damage at close range. Try to have as many arquebusiers together as you can, making up in numbers their lack of shot precision. Keep in mind that, like the muskets, arquebusiers are slow to reload and are almost useless if it happens to be raining.

MUSKETEERS



Better than the arquebus, the musket still has poor accuracy and only causes

real damage when the enemies are close enough. The clever thing about them is that, if you have three or more rows of musketeers, the front line will kneel while the back lines will take turns firing and reloading. Like the arquebusiers, once their ammo has run out, they're not the best hand-to-hand

The cavalry is one of your strongest units.

60 HEAVY CAVALRY (AKESHI MITSUNORI) MARCHING QUICKLY

Ants? Must be a picnic going on.

When the enemy troops start scattering chase them down.



To defend your side of the bridge, lay your army out intelligently.



Remember the advantage defending from a height gives you.



Forests are for ambushes.



Choose the territories you're going to attack carefully.



Wait for them, they'll run on to your spears.

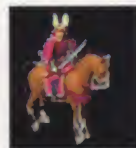
fighters and are only really useful as enemy fodder.

CAVALRY ARCHERS



Basically an archer on a horse. You have to be aware that they can't be used in the same way as the Yari Cavalry. If you get over-excited and start sending them into the heat of battle they'll end up as a sticky kebab. Keep them as far away as you would ordinary archers, but take advantage of the fact that they can move into new positions much faster. So, if you are defending from the top of a hill you can move away easily when the oncoming troops get to your position.

HEAVY CAVALRY



By far the most powerful mounted unit, these riders are armed with swords and will dispatch almost anything that stands in their way. The downside is their expense, the upside is that they are heavily armoured and can only be harmed by missile weapons. Don't deploy them on a hillside: you'll be losing most of the advantage this cavalry gives you and, as with every other cavalry unit, they are pretty much useless in the forest areas.

SUN TZU'S ART OF WAR

Written more than 2,000 years ago, *Art Of War* is a fascinating book on the theory of war that laid down the basics of military strategy as well as the more complex tactics of Japanese warfare. *Shogun* developer Creative Assembly clearly had a good read of this tome while

creating the game and recommends all players to do the same. Here are few choice extracts, losing the haiku structure for lack of space.

★ When deploying troops and observing the enemy you should take into account the following points: when we can't defeat the enemy we should always take up a defensive disposition. When we can defeat the enemy we should engage battle. One takes up a defensive position because one lacks the strength necessary for victory. One engages in battle because one has more than enough strength to do so.

★ An army that's adept at defending doesn't let the enemy gain even the smallest insight as to its actual situation (as if it were hidden underground). An army adept at attacking strikes as if it were descending from the heavens (not giving the enemy an opportunity to defend). A general who can do this can defend without worry of loss and can attack with the assurance of victory.

★ When crossing mountains quickly, follow the valley floors. When stationing troops, look for high ground. Look for places suitable to attack as well as defend. If the enemy is first to gain the high ground do not commence a frontal attack. These are the rules of combat in mountainous areas.

★ When fording a river, cross quickly and distance yourself from it, lest the enemy take advantage of the situation. If the enemy crosses a river in the course of their attack, do not go to the water to engage them. Wait until they are halfway across and half on the water and then engage them. If anticipating engagement with the enemy do not engage from a riverbank. Rather, ready your

forces on high ground facing the water. Even more important, do not take up a position downriver from the enemy.

★ When waging war on a plain, deploy your troops on level ground. Have your back or right flank toward high ground. You want the high ground behind you and the low before you.

★ When the enemy is near but calm, he is depending on the hazards of the terrain. When the enemy charges while still far away, he is enticing me to advance. When the enemy takes up a position on open level ground, there is surely some benefit for him there.

★ The shaking of trees indicates that the enemy is advancing. Many birds taking wing indicate that the enemy is lying hidden in ambush.

★ Whether you want to attack a certain place, lay siege to a city or assassinate an enemy general, you must first have a spy find out the name and the character of the commander in charge.

★ Make the enemy focus on domestic affairs by inciting internal dissent.

★ According to the principles and tactics of warfare, do not expect the enemy not to come. Instead, be in complete military readiness. Do not expect the enemy not to attack. Instead, assure yourself that the enemy would not be successful in the event of an attack.

★ There are five personal traits that are dangerous in a commander:

- 1 He who is intent on dying can be murdered.
- 2 He who is intent on living can be captured.
- 3 He who is quick to anger can be insulted.
- 4 He who is self-conscious can be humiliated.
- 5 He who is compassionate can be troubled. [PZ]

DEAR WANDY

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★ GUESS WHO Phil Wand

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Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

SCREEN TEST

Q I have a new PC that I use with a 17in monitor from my old Acorn RISC PC. I want to run my monitor on the proper Windows drivers, but as I don't have any, I have to use the default monitor settings. However, I find that the display hurts my eyes when I put it on lower than 32-bit colour. I don't mind this too much but I'm sure I could get more out of it. I've tried other drivers from other monitors, but none of them seem right. My dad assures me that it's a Philips monitor, although this isn't written anywhere on the plastic shell. I don't actually want to run the desktop on more than 1280 x 1024, and I'd like to know at what point it would blow up or damage the monitor.

Stephane S-R

A Standard monitors don't actually need drivers, all the 'driver' file contains is a list of permissible resolutions and refresh rates. The capabilities of your video card (as defined in its driver) are then combined with this, and the result is a group of settings that both the card and the screen are able to handle. This works very well – until you turn up with

something unusual, like a monitor from an old Acorn PC.

You could pick a 21in monitor and then play with the huge amount of resolutions this will add to the list until you find one that works, but it's possible that your monitor is simply not capable of 1280 x 1024. Not only is this quite likely, it's also impossible to change.

As for damaging your monitor, you would be very unlucky to kill a modern monitor with the 15 second resolution test Windows performs before switching modes; most monitors will protect themselves from 'stupid' settings by going into power save mode.

PAGE FAULT CITY

Q Could you help me with a few problems that I am having with my computer at the moment. My first problem is invalid page faults. These have occurred right after a clean install, so I think it may have something to do with the BIOS settings, which I haven't touched. These seem to increase in direct proportion to the amount of software I have installed. Second, when in the middle of a game, the screen goes 'plink' and flicks back to Windows. Nothing shows up in the task manager. It's as if the program had never existed. I've tried everything I can think of, bar messing with the BIOS, but to no avail. Asking the Microsoft support site actually generated another invalid page fault! Please could you help me as my keyboard can only take so many punches. Yours in utter frustration (and sore handedness),

Ben Jackson

A This could be caused by any number of things, but let's try a few of the favourites. First, check for dodgy SIMMs on your motherboard. Drop back to one SIMM for a day or two and see what happens. If this is no good, repeat the process with the others. Second, dust. No, really. I've

seen many people lose hair when all that was needed was a good blow. Third, heat, often caused by dust inside vents. Check your CPU fan is spinning freely and that you have a nice thin film of silicon grease between the processor and its heat sink. And we mean *thin* film, not a squelching clump resembling chewing gum. Fourth, your power supply may not be up to it. Have you recently added things to your box? Could you have pushed your PSU just a little bit too far? A top notch graphics card, sound card, DVD drive, modem and the like are going to suck

“My empty Maxtor 20.4Gb hard drive is only showing 19Gb available. How come? Should it be 20.4Gb? Am I losing 1Gb? Or is it available and will come up when I am over 19Gb in use?”

juice like nothing else. Fifth, double check the voltage for your CPU. AMD seemed to change the voltage setting for the K6 family on an almost weekly basis. Ignore the motherboard manual and see what the chip has stamped on the top. Running too high will make the chip sweat. Running too low will give you all manner of weird errors. Last, you may have over-optimistic performance settings in your BIOS. Jump in there and set everything to factory default.

STUCK FAST

Q I have a problem. My hard drive is deranged. Once I've turned my computer on, I'll try to run an application and the hard drive will just stop. It seems like it's getting stuck or even skipping like a CD. My computer runs all applications without problems – Internet Explorer, CheckIt98, etc – but when I go to play a game, it just stops. No black screen, no mouse movement, no nothing. Then I have to reboot. The problem started after I installed a UDMA tool for my ETEQ motherboard chipset. My

machine is an AMD K6-2 450 with SOYO 5EMA+ motherboard, TNT2 Ultra and Sound Blaster Live!. The hard drive is a Western Digital 13.6Gb drive. I'm not very keen on having to buy a new drive as I am still at school and have almost finished paying my parents back for it.

Matt Arnstein

A We think you've probably just answered your own question. We're not 100 per cent sure what you mean by 'UDMA tool', we assume you mean driver update, but if the problem started after you installed it, you should have waved it goodbye many moons

JAMMY B, GETS LOST IN SPACE
ago. Is the slight performance improvement worth it for all these crashes? Unlikely. Check for the May 2000 version of the ETEQ drivers and a BIOS update from www.soyo.com.tw.

CREATIVE MATHS

Q My empty Maxtor 20.4Gb hard drive is only showing 19Gb available. How come? Shouldn't it be 20.4Gb? Am I losing 1Gb? If so, where? Or is it available and will come up when I am over 19Gb in use? I know 1Gb is not much but I want what I paid for.

Jammy B

A Welcome to the wonderful world of computer mathematics. All of us are used to a kilo-something being a thousand, a mega-something being a million, a giga-something being 1,000 million, and so on. Unfortunately, though, 1,000 is a very bad number for computers when represented in binary (1111101000), so instead the nearby number of 1,024 is used (1000000000). What this means for you is that a computer's kilo-something is



Possibly the nicest monitor in the world, the Mitsubishi 2040u, with 22in Natural Flat CRT. You want one.

actually 1,024. And a *mega-something* is actually 1,024 *kilo-somethings*. Your hard drive is probably a gnat's chuff over 20,400,000,000 bytes in capacity, which if you work in 'real' numbers is 20.4Gb. However, if you divide it by 'computer' numbers, it comes out as 19Gb. This didn't matter in the days of 20Mb drives when the discrepancy wasn't so obvious, but as the drives get bigger and bigger, the difference is really starting to add up. If you were Mr Salesman, which number would you stick on the case: 'real' number or 'computer' number?

BIGGER PIPE

Q I play a lot of multiplayer games over the Internet. For years I've watched as low ping bastards ruled the servers, killing people before they even see their opponent. Now I want to become one of them. I was thinking of upgrading my connection to ADSL, and was all set for getting it when one of my friends told me that BT had disabled the game ports – or something like that – so no games can be played

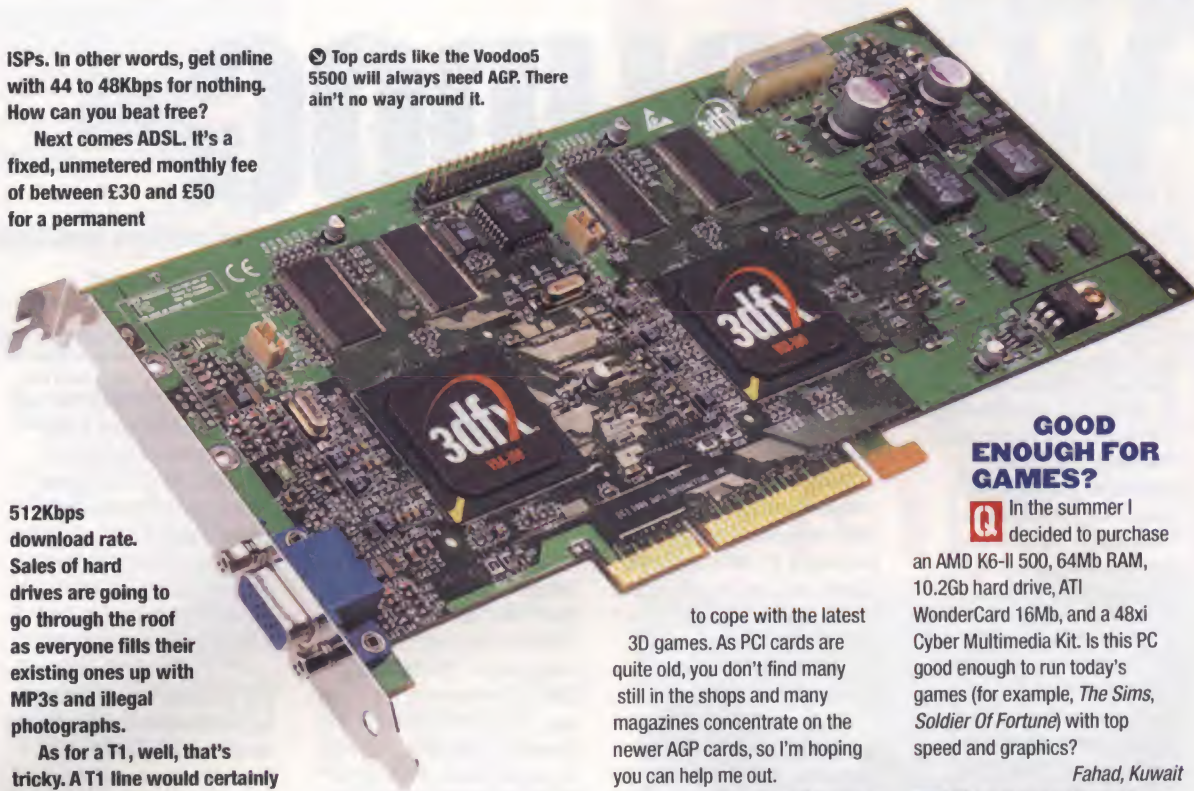
ISPs. In other words, get online with 44 to 48Kbps for nothing. How can you beat free?

Next comes ADSL. It's a fixed, unmetered monthly fee of between £30 and £50 for a permanent

512Kbps download rate. Sales of hard drives are going to go through the roof as everyone fills their existing ones up with MP3s and illegal photographs.

As for a T1, well, that's tricky. A T1 line would certainly impress your friends with 1.5Mbps to frolic around in, but with a price tag of over £1K per month, it would not impress your bank manager. Then again, if you have that sort of money to throw at your Internet

☹ Top cards like the Voodoo5 5500 will always need AGP. There ain't no way around it.



GOOD ENOUGH FOR GAMES?

Q In the summer I decided to purchase an AMD K6-II 500, 64Mb RAM, 10.2Gb hard drive, ATI WonderCard 16Mb, and a 48xi Cyber Multimedia Kit. Is this PC good enough to run today's games (for example, *The Sims*, *Soldier Of Fortune*) with top speed and graphics?

Fahad, Kuwait

A The processor is more than up to the job, roughly the same performance-wise as an Intel Celeron 400. The only component we have doubts about is the video card. It's probably OK for a game like *The Sims*, where polygon counts and frame rates aren't really an issue, but a first-person shooter such as *Soldier Of Fortune* is going to make it weep. Look at upgrading to something like a 3dfx Voodoo3 or, if you can afford it, the latest and greatest GeForce 2 GTS cards. **[EW]**

to cope with the latest

3D games. As PCI cards are quite old, you don't find many still in the shops and many magazines concentrate on the newer AGP cards, so I'm hoping you can help me out.

David Geoffrey Evans

A The old PCI slot still seems to refuse to die – there are more new cards available for it every month. Although they will never be as nippy as the AGP versions, they do save people like yourself from the aggravation of having to upgrade your motherboard.

A few pointers for you: 3dfx has the Voodoo3 2000 and 3000 boards in both AGP and PCI, and Creative and Guillemot make TNT2 cards in PCI format.

regardless of whether you had a good modem connection or an OC-12 (622Mbps), you'd still be able to get online and play *Half-Life*.

PCI WON'T DIE

Q My computer is just over a year old, so I've decided to buy a 3dfx card to prolong its life. The problem is my computer doesn't have an AGP slot and I'm not really sure what PCI card to look for. I'm basically looking for a good value card that will be able



You don't want it, but BT still keep on pushing it – ISDN that is.

online. Anyway, I still want to upgrade my connection so that I can get a lower ping while playing online games and download things from the Internet more quickly. I've been looking around at the various connections available, ISDN, T1 and ADSL, and I'm not sure which one to get. What would you suggest, bearing in mind value for money and the actual speed of the line?

Simon Reynolds

A To cover your first point, BT is highly unlikely to disable ADSL for games use. As for value for money, top of the list would be the increasing number of freephone 0800

connection, Wandy consultancy costs £300 an hour, plus VAT.

At the bottom of the value for money chart comes the technology that BT is still desperately trying to sell ten years after it was out of date – ISDN. It has a relatively high monthly line rental combined with a local call charges for each 64Kbps link. You can double up your channels to 128Kbps, but it costs you two phone calls, a fact BT loves to hide in its marketing literature.

Remember, when all is said and done, the average online game sucks between 40 and 50Kb of data each second, so



Dismemberment is hard on your 3D card. And your mind.

WATCHDOG

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★ WRITER Adam Philips

LIVING IN A WORLD O' HURT?

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WRITE TO Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL Email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

UNTIMELY DELIVERY

Q I purchased a PC four weeks ago from Time Computers in Southend. Even though I have called either them or their head office every single day for over two weeks, it's still sitting in the warehouse. I was told in the shop – after I had signed on the dotted line – that it would take ten to 14 working days to deliver but to expect it in half that time.

I ordered a 19in monitor upgrade initially and, after ten days, rang to chase the delivery. I also checked that it was coming with the monitor. They said it was

waiting for speakers and that I'd only ordered a 17in monitor! I proved my delivery note said 19in and it was upgraded. Three days later I was told the machine was ready to go.

Three weeks after ordering the machine I rang up and asked why it hadn't been delivered and was told it was coming in a few days. I now ring every day and get the same answer: "It's issued and ready to be delivered." Three days ago, I rang Time's head office to complain. I was told my PC was on hold as I apparently want to change my order, and the system was not due to be delivered!

This 'comedy' continued and to cut a long story short I've now been waiting four-and-a-half weeks for my computer to be delivered! When I complained, I was told that this amount of time was reasonable for a mail order firm – but I am due to collect it from a shop! Call me old fashioned but surely mail order involves the mail?

Dave Freeman

A Ho, hum. While mail order companies can wax lyrical about reasonable delivery times, the 'stops-and-starts' nightmare you've been through is, quite frankly, unacceptable.

Watchdog asked Time what the hell was going on. "When the monitor was ordered, there was an error on our behalf," says Zalkifal Shafi in Time's Escalations department.

"Instead of a 19in monitor being dispatched, a 17in monitor was sent to the store. Totally unknown to the store and at the same time, another customer had ordered a 17in monitor but the store only received a 15in monitor. The customer then insisted that he had waited long enough for the monitor and that he was not leaving the store without one."

Because of this balls-up in communication, your 'Incorrect' monitor was given to the other consumer and the store was left with a 15in monitor. Confused yet? Never mind – Time now says that your 19in monitor order has been re-raised and delivered.

Shafi says: "We sincerely apologise for the inconvenience that this has caused the customer and the least I can do is offer the customer a two calendar month extension on their warranty. In future, if the customer ever has a problem, I will see that a solution is forthcoming so the customer does not have to suffer."

Hold them to that, Dave...

GOING, GOING, GONE...

Tech, it may be. Direct, it most certainly isn't

Q In September 1999, I decided to buy a new computer and thought e-commerce was the way to go. However, while people can benefit from the savings to be made using this method, I would warn them that Internet companies seem to have very little accountability when it comes to treating customers properly.

My own bad experience has been with Tech Direct. All the parts I ordered arrived on time, but in January 2000 my 17in Formac monitor broke. I was not impressed. I called Tech Direct and was informed that I should return the monitor to them so they could, in turn, send it back to Formac to be repaired.

After a few weeks I phoned back and was told Formac wouldn't have it repaired until the beginning of April. However, April came and still there was still no sign of my monitor.

I'm not entirely sure what happened after this but as far as I could tell customer services at Tech Direct told me that the monitor was repaired and had been sent to someone else. They told me this about two or three weeks ago, but since then I have been offered no indication of when I'm ever going to get my monitor back. It seems that Tech Direct and Formac are squabbling over who should sort out my problem.

If this wasn't annoying enough, the way I've been treated by Tech Direct has been appalling. I've phoned them enough times for them to be on my friends and family numbers list, but every time I call they just fob me off for another few days. Please help

me out – I just want my money back now so, hopefully, I can get another monitor that won't explode on me. I've been unable to use my computer for 14 weeks and I'm getting desperate.

Gordon Jones

A Bad news unfortunately. When we contacted Tech Direct, it had the following to say: "Just to outline the situation briefly," explains Jim Dale at Tech Direct, "there was a dispute between ourselves and Formac regarding the return of the monitor to Mr Jones. The upshot of this was that Formac claims to have delivered the monitor to us but unfortunately we can find no trace of it."

Normally in a situation like this Tech Direct say that they would consider replacing your monitor with "an acceptable alternative". There is a wee problem however: "Regrettably, this is not an ordinary time for Tech Direct," admits Dale. "To be blunt, the company entered a period of administration in May and as such we have been advised that we are not in a position to deal with issues such as this which arose prior to the administration order."

Dale says that you will now need to seek redress either through your credit card company or lodge a claim directly with the administrators. They can be reached on: Poppleton and Appleby, 4 Charterhouse Square, London EC1M 6E (tel: 020-7253 3266).

In the meantime we had a word with Alan Stevens, editor of *Which? Online*, to glean his expert e-commerce advice. Here's what he had to say: "The fact that Tech Direct has gone into administration is obviously a problem because it means that Gordon is now in line with the rest of the creditors, and people like the Inland Revenue tend to have a higher place in the queue. Therefore, the poor old consumer doesn't always stand much of a chance."

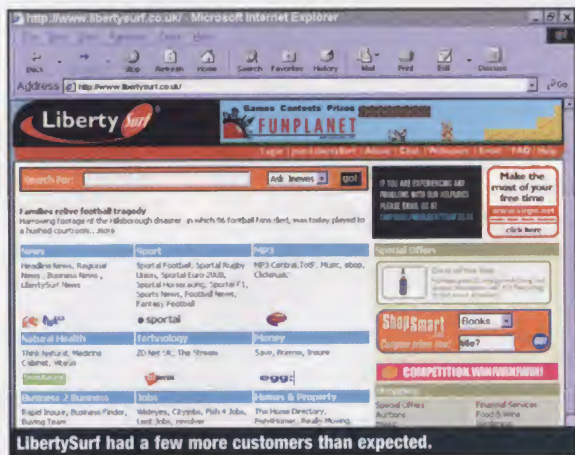
Alan continues: "However, if he has bought the product by credit card, then he does have the protection of the Consumer Credit Act which says that if you're buying goods valued at more than £100, then you are protected by the Act. This means you can reclaim from the credit card company. In law, the company is 'jointly and severally liable' under the Consumer Credit Act for any problem that arises with something you have bought using a credit card. So if the company has gone into administration, you can go back to the credit card company and say, 'please sort this problem out – I would like a refund'."

Bear in mind, though, that you can only get a refund on the monitor, and not the entire system. Watchdog recommends you drop a line to Formac to find out how much the monitor would normally cost in the marketplace. Let us know how you get on.

UNLIBERATED?

Q I purchased a £20 start-up disk for LibertySurf on Saturday. I have not been able to connect to the off-peak number at all. The tech support and customer services are worse than useless and provide no help. They say the servers are down and that I should wait a few days. Meanwhile, other members of tech support basically insinuate that I am stupid and am not setting up the software correctly.

I did manage to connect using the peak-rate number but then discovered their floating ad banners on the website – like their partners X-stream has. I can understand X-stream has these restrictive banners in



place, but a fee-paying service should not have advertisements in such an obtrusive place – playing online games is a big no, no because of this. Before I purchased the disk, I did some checking up on its Website and nowhere in the FAQ, help, or terms and conditions (which is a broken link) does it mention advertising banners.

Please could you investigate LibertySurf as they are worse than Screaming.net ever were.

the number of staff on our free technical helpline.”

LibertySurf also says that it has decided to temporarily withhold its product from its stockists, Comet and MVC, as a result of the high demand. “The LibertySurf CD will be back on sale as soon as all existing customer queries have been resolved,” adds LibertySurf. “In addition, existing customers will receive an extra month to their subscriptions – so

questionnaire and a copy of the *Half-Life: Game Of The Year Edition* manual. Being naïve, I didn’t take any notice and set about playing it.

I tried to play *TFC* online with *Half-Life* only to find the manual was for the wrong game! It said on the front “*TFC* included” but instead, I had to gather up patches and spend an hour online getting the updates needed. Then I went back to the 500 levels disk included with *PCZ* #88. I unzipped some level files and ran them only to find no enemies of any kind whatsoever.

When I tried to use *WorldCraft 2.0* to add enemies, I found no record of it being in the *Half-Life* directory as it had said on the front of the manual. Can you find out what’s going on?

Glen Wiggall

A A misleading box or just a mild outbreak of confusion? The latter, Watchdog reckons after talking with *Half-Life*’s publishers: “When we released *Half-Life: Game Of The Year Edition*, we enclosed the original manual, the updated CD with *Team Fortress*, *Uplink*, *Half-Life* (patched up to 1.0.1.1), and a slip enclosed with instructions detailing how to get *Team Fortress* and *Uplink* to run,” said Havas Interactive.

It says that since the release of the *Game Of The Year Edition*, there have been updates to the *Half-life* multiplayer side of things: “There is now a new patch (released on June 6) taking you up to version 1.1.0.0, which can be downloaded from www.planethalflife.com. It adds a new version of *Team Fortress*, a new mod called *Opposing Force CTF*, and new Internet code intended to increase the speed you play over the Internet.”

Finally, it explained that *WorldCraft 2.0* is a completely separate program which can be found on the CD in a folder. Let us know if you don’t find any of the above to be correct, Glen. [E]

“LibertySurf is anything but the Internet liberated – it’s more like ConstrictingSurf”

KEVIN LIVERSAGE ON LIBERTYSURF’S TECH SUPPORT

Could you also ask them why we pay £20 a year when, as far as I can tell, X-stream still offers this service, albeit a lot slower, for free. I believe LibertySurf is deliberately restricting access. In short, LibertySurf is anything but the Internet liberated – it’s more like ConstrictingSurf.

Kevin Liversage

A In these days of ‘free’ ISPs, you’d expect a £20 charge to glean you a lot. This obviously hasn’t been the case with Kevin so off Watchdog went to LibertySurf to see if it could shed light on your dire situation: “We apologise unreservedly for the difficulties Kevin Liversage has had with the LibertySurf service,” says a spokesperson for the company. “When we launched in May, we had exceptionally high levels of demand to sign up to the service and our free 24/7 free customer helpline received a significantly higher level of calls than we originally anticipated. This stretched the helpline considerably and created a back-log of calls from customers who needed help in getting online.”

OK, it’s the usual “we had no idea how popular we’d be” response. So what are they doing about the situation? “To ensure that the needs of existing LibertySurf customers are satisfied, we have increased

13 months instead of 12. If any customers do not wish to continue with our service, we will provide them with a full refund.”

As for your complaint about the advertising, LibertySurf says it will not be removing its banner advertising, “as this is what enables us to offer such a great value service to our customers. Full-screen games will have the ads running but their performance should not be affected.”

If the advertisements are a real bane, then Watchdog recommends you ask for that full refund and take your business elsewhere...

AN UNFULFILLED LIFE?

Q Having bought the original *Half-Life* game a week ago from Electronics Boutique in Gloucester, I was looking forward to playing the game fully. When I bought the game, I opened the box to find the game, a

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VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

EXCLUSIVE



Next month is going to be rather special. As well as the exclusive review and a demo of *Voyager: Elite Force* (the first single-player game to use the *Quake III* engine), we’ve got an exclusive demo of last month’s cover game, *Vampire* – see for yourself why we awarded it Classic status. The exclusives just keep on coming with a fully playable demo of *Kiss Psycho Circus* from ex-Ion Storm posse Third Law.

But that’s not all. We jetted to the US of A in order to bring you a huge *Alice* preview, and we’ll have the definitive review of Geoff Crammond’s latest Formula One obsession, *GP3*. Was it worth the wait?

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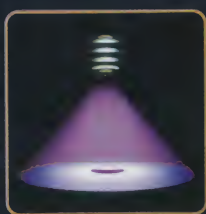
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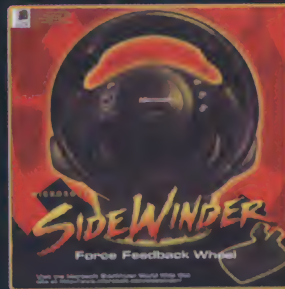
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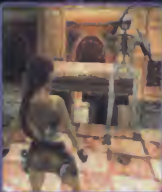
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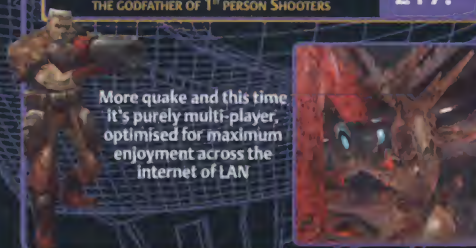
The best selling football sim returns for its annual outing, with a whole host of improved features. New team strips and stats, updated graphics and all new music are just some of the many new additions to the popular series.



QUAKE 3 THE GODFATHER OF 1st PERSON SHOOTERS

£17.⁹⁹

More quake and this time it's purely multi-player, optimised for maximum enjoyment across the internet of LAN



THEME PARK 2 THEME PARK 'EM UP

£29.⁹⁹

One of the best selling games of all time finally receives a long awaited sequel. Create the ultimate rollercoaster then ride it yourself in full 3D! Four different themes (eg Jungle) plus you can download additional attractions from themeparkworld.com. Keep your punters happy with ever more extravagant and dangerous rides!

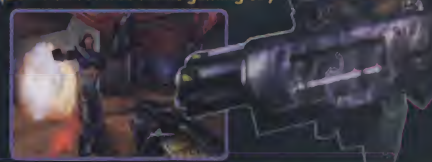


UNREAL TOURNAMENT 3D SHOOTER

£19.⁹⁹



Designed to recreate the thrill of multiplayer gaming for one player, it has advanced artificial intelligence to simulate playing against devious human opponents. New modes of play include Capture the Flag and Assault, where players have to defend or attack a fortress. 35 brand new arenas, 3 new weapons and numerous scenarios to increase replay value. You can program how you want your computer controlled adversaries to react or behave when their getting beaten to easily. A perfect game for polishing your first person shooter prowess. (Demo on our free online gaming CD)



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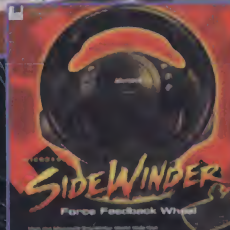
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Grand Prix 3 from the legendary Geoff Crammond is easily the most anticipated driving game of all time. His previous two GP titles were genre defining and GP2 remains the best F1 game available despite it's advancing years. That's all about to change however, as GP3 prepares to put you in the cockpit of the most advanced Formula 1 simulation ever. Included are all the teams, drivers and circuits from the 1999 season, but for the ultimate realism you'll also need a good wheel. They don't come much better than Microsoft's Sidewinder with Force Feedback, and this is your chance to get 'em both, plus you'll save yourself some money into the bargain. Like Schumacher and Ferrari, it's a perfect combination!



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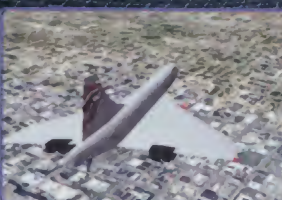
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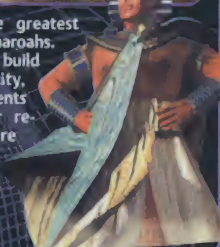


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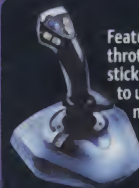
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WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

This month we played Clan UK at *Counter-Strike* (and won), we also took the opportunity to find out what's currently on their HDs

★ YOUR HOST Martin Korda **VENUE** The Playing Fields, London



PETER PANDIS
22, Student

What's on your hard drive?

"*Half-Life*, *Counter-Strike*, *Quake III* and *Asheron's Call*."

What are you looking forward to playing in the future?

"*Black & White* and *Diablo II*."

What's the best mod you've ever played and why?

"*Counter-Strike*, because it's good."

Care to elaborate?

"You get to kill loads and you have to think strategically. Games like *Quake* focus too much on graphics and not enough on gameplay."



TAMARA PANDIS
33, Works For An
Embroidery Company

Any relation to the bloke I just spoke to?

"Yeah, I'm his wife."

Then I already know what's on your hard drive.

"We play different things. I've got *Ultima Online*."

So you're not into shooting?

"No, I'm too crap at it."

Do you just save the violence for your husband when you want to use the computer?

"We've got two computers, so we can play at the same time."



JUSTIN DAVIES
16, Student

What's on your hard drive?

"*Ultima Online*, *Counter-Strike*, *Quake III: Fortress* and *Soldier Of Fortune*."

Chris Anderson loves playing *UO*. What would you do if you met him in the game?

"Probably kill him with an e-bolt."

What are you looking forward to playing in the future?

"*Team Fortress 2*."

You're quite violent, aren't you?

"I love shooting people in the..."

OK, stop there. I think you need some serious help.



HEAD HARVESTER
27, Plays Games

What's on your hard drive?

"*Quake III*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Half-Life* and a couple of helicopter sims."

What's the best FPS you've ever played?

"*Half-Life*, because it just keeps going on and on."

Have you played *Daikatana*?

"I'm trying to avoid it."

How would you react if someone forced you to play it at gunpoint?

"I'd probably be violently ill."

I think that's a fair reaction.



ROBERT PETIN
21, Seeking Employment

What's on your hard drive?

"*Ultima Online*, *Counter-Strike*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Half-Life*, *Team Fortress Classic*, *Comanche Hokum* and a couple of flight sims."

What did you think of *Comanche Hokum*?

"I thought it was excellent. Very realistic and fun to play."

What's your worst experience on a plane?

"One of my eardrums burst."

Ouch. So what are you looking forward to playing in the future?

"*Diablo II* and *Vampire*."



KIERON MURHPY
28, Money Broker

What's on your hard drive?

"*Asheron's Call*, *Counter-Strike* and *Ultima Online*."

What are you looking forward to playing in the future?

"*UO2* and *Diablo II*."

Do you think online RPGs can take over a person's life?

"Yep, *UO* took over my life for two and a half years."

How did that affect you.

"It made me more violent towards games players. Only within games though, I wouldn't hit anyone in real life."



SIMON GOLDBERGER
26, Computer Engineer

What's on your hard drive?

"*Diablo II Beta*, *Asheron's Call*, *Ultima Online*, *Counter-Strike* and *Quake III*."

How do you rate *Diablo II* from what you've played of the beta?

"It's very good. Essentially it's *Diablo*, but it's very playable, and well worth looking forward to."

How do you think the online gaming community will like it?

"There are so many people who have been looking forward to it, that I think it'll do very well."



MATT CLARKE
21, Assistant Network Administrator

What's on your hard drive?

"*Quake III: Fortress*, *TF: Classic* and *Unreal Tournament*."

So you're into guns then?

"Yep, and axes."

Would you be interested in becoming an assassin?

"Depends if the people I had to knock off deserved it or not."

So, would you be up for a job?

"At the moment I'm fully booked." **Shame. We could do with someone else winning at *Quake III*, other than Dave or Mark.**



SEAN ORMEROD
19, Student

What's on your hard drive?

"*Monkey Island 1-3*, *Evolva*, *Asheron's Call*, *Diablo II Beta* and *Battle Zone 2*."

Do you have a monkey fetish or something?

"Ha ha ha, not at all. I play *Monkey Island* more for the nostalgia trip than for anything else."

How do you think *M14* will shape up?

"I'm not sure what to expect, but I'm hoping it's going to be better."

Relax, we've seen it and it's looking great.



JENNY THUMBALL
18, Post Assistant

What's on your hard drive?

"*Asheron's Call*, *Quake III*, *Unreal Tournament* and *Half-Life*."

You people are violent.

"Not really. Playing these games is a really good way of releasing some aggression."

What are you looking forward to playing in the future?

"*Diablo II* and *Ultima Online 2*."

What's best, *AC*, *UO* or *EverQuest*?

"Peter and Kieron say *EverQuest* sucks and *AC* rules. I agree."

PCZONE TOP 100

Welcome to the definitive buyers' guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages represent the best titles across all genres. Check here for regular updates

This is the new *PC ZONE* Top 100. Within it you will find the best games you can currently buy for your PC. All the games here deserve a place in our illustrious Top 100 as we go to print, but that could

all change next month when newer titles come in and older games receive new ratings to reflect where they stand in the great scheme of things. Shrewd buyers will always check here first before parting with their money.

BENCHMARK GAME

Benchmark titles are the games that you simply must have if you are a fan of the genre. They are considered by the *PC ZONE* team to be absolute classics and should be bought without hesitation. All new games are compared to their genre's benchmark title when they are reviewed. Bear this in mind before writing into Mailbox

complaining that the latest 3D shooter didn't automatically get 90 per cent; check here first to see what it's up against! Additionally, all games in that genre will receive a new rating every time a new benchmark title comes along.

NEW ENTRY

In the wonderful world of PC gaming, new titles come in every month, some of which are better than the games currently in the Top 100. When this happens, they will gain their rightful place in the Top 100, and a lesser title will drop out to make room for it.

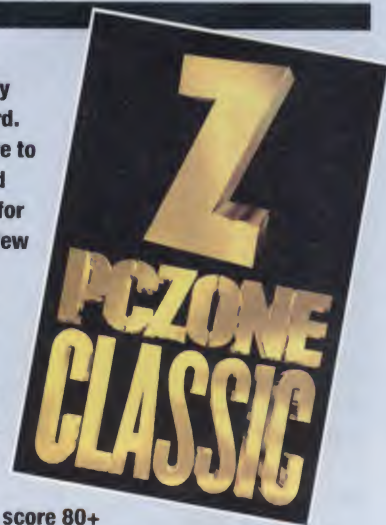
BUDGET

If a game in the Top 100 is available on budget, it will be tagged accordingly. Games that are lower in price than other titles in their genre do not necessarily receive a new score to reflect this. The latest score the game received will still apply; it is up to you to decide whether or not the game is worth buying at its new price point.

Under the *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. There are now very few titles that can justifiably be described as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean

you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the *PC ZONE* Award

For Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them, but when we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!



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FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

HALF-LIFE

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 95%

✦ Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best AI ever coded. *Half-Life* is probably still the best game you can install on your PC, and it's now available with the superb *Opposing Force* add-on in the 'Generations' pack.

PUBLISHER Sierra
• 0118 9209 100



UNREAL TOURNAMENT

PCZ #81 • 90%

✦ Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III's* multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



QUAKE III ARENA

PCZ #87 • 89%

✦ The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* make it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



ALIENS VS PREDATOR

PCZ #77 • 87%

✦ It might not be the best, but it's definitely the scariest FPS you can buy. *Aliens Vs Predator* is also the only game that offers three distinct ways of playing through the game, so if you're looking for a solid single-player blast, this provides excellent value for money.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



QUAKE II: QUAD DAMAGE

PCZ #59 • 86%

✦ The sequel to "the most important PC game ever" turns out to be more than worth the wait. The single-player mode might be a let-down, but if you have access to a network or a fast Internet connection you'll be in heaven. Now available with all the official mission packs.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

PCZ #88 • 82%

✦ The original *Thief* set new standards in FPS titles with its move away from mindless action towards stealth and its excellent use of light and sound. This sequel delivers more of the same quality gameplay, minus the out-of-place zombie levels.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

PCZ #71 • 81%

✦ Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. Boasting great graphics and storyline, its only faults are iffy AI and the fact that it's a bit too easy for hardcore *Quake* fans.

PUBLISHER Microdis • 00 33 1 4601 5401



SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

PCZ #89 • 80%

✦ More like an arcade explosion of unmitigated violence than a FPS in the *Half-Life* mould, *SoF* is a great deal of fun. It's also very sick. If you can stomach amputations and decapitations, then we can guarantee you pure, mindless entertainment.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME

PCZ #77 • 80%

✦ This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. Because, quite frankly, that side of the game was crap. We still stand by the game though - it's "classic adult entertainment".

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



SIN

PCZ #70 • 80%

✦ Releasing *Sin* at the same time as the vastly superior *Half-Life* was commercial suicide. But you can now bag this title for less than a tenner, which gives you the perfect excuse to find out just how good it actually is. No *Classic*, but an excellent game in its own right.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

STRATEGY

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

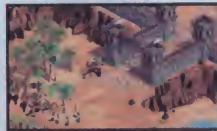
BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #89 • 93%

Shogun is the first strategy game that has blown us away in a long time. Command enormous armies in epic and bloody battles, send ninjas to assassinate enemy generals and conquer your way through the map of feudal Japan. The 3D engine works beautifully and the in-game options never get in the way of instant playability.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442

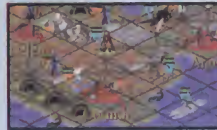


AGE OF EMPIRES II

PCZ #84 • 89%

✦ It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *Age of Empires II*, the gameplay has been honed to perfection with balanced units and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. Forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and opt for this classic RTS.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME

PCZ #68 • 88%

✦ A title that lives up to its name, *Civilization II* is probably the oldest game in the Top 100 and it will probably still be around in years to come. Turn-based and in 2D, it offers unlimited replayability and depth. One of the few games that everyone should own.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

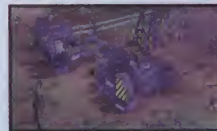


GROUND CONTROL

PCZ #92 • 87%

✦ RTSs are increasingly dropping resource management in order to concentrate on strategy. *Ground Control* pulls this off with flair, gorgeous looks and a brilliant camera. If you're after a 3D strategy title but don't fancy samurais, this is the answer.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



EARTH 2150

PCZ #90 • 86%

✦ A fantastic 3D engine and great detail team up with sheer playability to make this one of the best RTSs around. Second only to *Shogun* this year, *Earth 2150* is a more traditional strategy title, but it takes the genre even further than it has been before.

PUBLISHER Mattel Interactive • 0144 424 6333



HOMEWORLD

PCZ #82 • 85%

✦ *Homeworld* delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over; a fully three-dimensional, strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command the weapon, and the only limits are your imagination.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



THEOCRACY

PCZ #88 • 84%

✦ Blending the best of *Age of Empires* and *Civilization*, *Theocracy's* mix of real-time and turn-based gameplay allows you to guide the Aztecs through history and attempt to right the wrongs of the Hispanic conquerors. In short, an unexpected gem.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



IMPERIUM GALACTICA II

PCZ #85 • 83%

✦ Space expansion and empire building have never looked so good. This title boasts the depth of a turn-based strategy game with the immediate action of real-time, plus a great interface and tutorial, which means you'll know your way around in no time.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



C&C: TIBERIAN SUN

PCZ #81 • 82%

✦ Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



TOTAL ANNIHILATION

PCZ #56 • 82%

✦ With a ridiculous number of units and unrivalled pace, the original *TA* still stands head and shoulders above more recent efforts. No story to speak of and weak single-player action, but still, for a tenner, no-one should be without a copy.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #80 • 93%

✦ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully mix the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are. In short, it's a title that's absolutely indispensable.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



VAMPIRE: MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION

PCZ #92 • 90%

NEWENTRY This amazing RPG's a treat to play. An epic storyline, tactical combat and great acting and music more than make up for the fact that it's a linear hack 'n' slash game at heart.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000



PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

PCZ #87 • 87%

✦ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*. It's a dark, adult, scorcher of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind – and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



BALDUR'S GATE

PCZ #73 • 85%

✦ With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. In a nutshell, *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



FINAL FANTASY VII

PCZ #66 • 84%

✦ Despite the recent release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more subgames and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it should be out on budget soon.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000



FALLOUT 2

PCZ #71 • 83%

✦ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you liked the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper and one of the best RPGs money can buy.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



FINAL FANTASY VIII

PCZ #87 • 83%

✦ *FFVIII* features westernised graphics and the most incredible cut-scenes we've ever seen on a PC. Like its predecessor, this outing suffers from console linearity and repetitive battles, but it still retains enough charm to entrance most gamers.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



BUDGET

DIABLO

PCZ #48 • 78%

✦ Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game. The much anticipated sequel is out this summer.

PUBLISHER Zlabac/Blizzard • 01626 332233



ODIUM

PCZ #87 • 74%

✦ Imagine an RPG in the style of *Final Fantasy*, with battle sequences à la *X-COM*, and you'll get a good idea of what *Oidium* is like. The story is set in a European city populated by UN soldiers and an amazing variety of monsters. In short, it's curiously compelling.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



NOX

PCZ #87 • 72%

✦ This *Diablo*-style RPG is immensely addictive. The levels may be a little repetitive, but you'll find that persistence pays off in the form of great spells and weapons. Watch out for a massive multiplayer community spawning around this one.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

ACTION/ADVENTURES

GRIM FANDANGO

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 90%

✦ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic. A word of warning: It's bloody hard and if your mind doesn't work laterally you'll be playing it until the day you die.

PUBLISHER LucasArts • 020 7368 2255



DISCWORD NOIR

PCZ #79 • 89%

✦ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games and is all the better for it in our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Pratchett's off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

PCZ #84 • 88%

✦ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for the latest *Indy* outing. Thankfully, the adventure elements are still in place in this whip-cracking romp.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000



THE NOMAD SOUL

PCZ #83 • 87%

✦ Distinctly odd, but also refreshingly original, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by lap-dancers and (gulp) David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost pulls it off.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



NOCTURNE

PCZ #84 • 86%

✦ Why would you pay good money to be scared? Because it's damn good fun that's why, and if you find the average PC game laughable, we dare you to sit through *Nocturne* with your curtains drawn. It's a beautiful exercise in computer-generated fear.

PUBLISHER Take 2 • 01753 722900



MESSIAH

PCZ #85 • 85%

✦ Shiny's wonderful shooter features a chubby cherub, but also a bunch of whores and some gratuitous swearing. As Bob, under-age agent of God, you must possess people's bodies and, like a good Christian, kill absolutely everything that gets in your way.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

PCZ #83 • 85%

✦ Lara's back in her fourth (and best) adventure so far. More moves, better looks, intricate puzzles and a well-developed plot. It's not going to win over the cynics, but it's still a damn fine game.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000



RESIDENT EVIL II

PCZ #75 • 82%

✦ Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore, make for top entertainment.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 020 7368 2255



MONKEY ISLAND BOUNTY PACK

PCZ #74 • 80%

✦ *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000



SAM & MAX AND DAY OF THE TENTACLE

NOT REVIEWED • 78%

✦ Two of the finest adventure games in the world ever are now available in a single pack for a bargain price. They still match most titles that are released today, so go and buy them. Now.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000

RACING GAMES

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

BENCHMARK GAME



BUDGET

PCZ #68 • 89%

✦ Sporting an updated TOCA engine, *Colin McRae* is still the benchmark in rally simulations. It boasts realistic handling, car customisation and stacks of multiplayer options, which all contribute to keeping it well ahead of the competition. The fact that it's now available as a budget title makes it an absolute steal.

PUBLISHER Codemasters
• 01926 814132

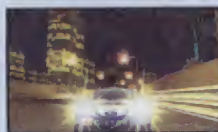


MIDTOWN MADNESS

PCZ #79 • 88%

✦ Jump in your car and drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun, this is definitely the best all-out arcade racer you can currently buy on PC.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



LE MANS 24 HOURS

PCZ #87 • 82%

✦ Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skillful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode culminating in the famous race itself.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199



TOCA 2

PCZ #76 • 82%

✦ Predictably, Codemasters has gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrolheads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

PCZ #84 • 81%

✦ Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this new racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.

PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015



MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

PCZ #92 • 80%

NEWENTRY ✦ More crazy two-wheeled antics in a sequel that doesn't drastically improve on the original, apart from the obvious graphical update. It's still great fun and far removed from reality – but you might want to track down the first one in the bargain bin.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000

PCZ #90 • 80%

Not as good as hooking up with your mates at the arcade, but still a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car around the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this much fun?

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



MONACO GRAND PRIX

PCZ #69 • 79%

✦ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. The game looks beautiful, plays even better, and the artificial intelligence is second to none. However, bear in mind that you need a hefty machine to have it looking its best.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



DRIVER

PCZ #82 • 78%

✦ Criticised for lacking the depth of *Midtown Madness* (it is a PlayStation conversion after all), this is still a good game. A pumping '70s soundtrack helps to recreate that *Starsky & Hutch* feeling. A wheel, an afro haircut and a false moustache are, of course, essential.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



SUPERBIKE 2000

PCZ #88 • 78%

✦ The best motorcycling sim on the PC, this game sports incredible visuals, slick handling and astonishing detail. But it's too easy to fall off unless you use computer-assisted help. However, for pure two-wheeled action, *Motocross Madness* is still the best option.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLIGHT SIMULATORS

FALCON 4

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #72 • 92%

✦ We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that for once we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* sports beautiful 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure that leaves the competition well and truly standing. If you're going to buy one flight sim, make it this one – it's the best example of its kind and we guarantee that you won't be disappointed.

PUBLISHER MicroProse
• 01454 893893



F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR

PCZ #68 • 89%

✦ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece seems perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you who are looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this title.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633



F/A-18E SUPER HORNET

PCZ #83 • 88%

✦ If you like your flight sims to be realistic with a great big capital 'R', then look no further. In fact, this game is so lifelike that the US Navy has adopted it for promotional work and ground-based familiarity training. But make sure you watch out for friendly fire.

PUBLISHER Titus Software • 01926 335 5400



MIG ALLEY

PCZ #80 • 87%

✦ *Mig Alley* gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't let that put you off. If you're willing to put in the work, this title will repay you with a wealth of excellent in-flight graphics and a selection of brilliant mission planning elements.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337

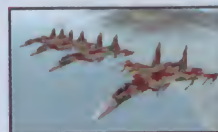


FLIGHT UNLIMITED III

PCZ #82 • 86%

✦ For all those sim aficionados who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than as a lame excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this (along with the *Flight Sim* series) is an object of worship and devotion. It certainly deserves high praise.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FLANKER 2.0

PCZ #85 • 86%

✦ Hardcore pilots with a taste for Yank blood need look no further. Extremely hard to fly, but very rewarding nevertheless, *Flanker 2.0* recreates the real thing in minute detail. However, be warned: hours of practice are needed before you go off shooting stuff.

PUBLISHER SSI • 01293 651300



JANE'S USAF

PCZ #88 • 85%

✦ *USAF* offers playability that allows non-hardcore flyers to have a successful spin. While this means that the standards of realism are nowhere near other titles, it fills the gap for those of us who don't care about such things. This is a great flight sim that anybody can enjoy.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



ENEMY ENGAGED: COMANCHE HOKUM

PCZ #89 • 85%

✦ The latest helicopter sim to hit the shelves, it is also the best one to date. In no other game do you feel the excitement of being involved in a real war, largely due to an excellent dynamic campaign mode. Helicopter sims don't come any better than this classy title.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337



JANE'S F/A-18

PCZ #89 • 84%

✦ Another game based on the US Navy's Super Hornet, this is an incredibly detailed jet sim that suffers slightly from being too hard for beginners. Graphically, it's up there with the best and the interface makes you feel as close to the real thing as is possible on a desktop.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



TEAM ALLIGATOR

PCZ #85 • 84%

✦ Helicopter sims are rare but, when they do appear on the scene, they are usually superb. Although *Team Alligator* doesn't quite surpass the cheaper *Apache Havoc*, it has truly beautiful graphics and feels great to fly. Without doubt the best Russian chopper sim around.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

SPORTS

FIFA 2000

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #84 • 88%

★ The FIFA franchise has been rolling on for years and it gets better each time. Although it missed a Classic rating by a whisker, *FIFA 2000* is still the best conversion of the finest sport known to man. You should be able to find it on budget soon. Or you could always fork out the full price for the recent *Euro 2000*, which is essentially the same game.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442

SUPREME SNOWBOARDING

PCZ #85 • 86%

★ Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives an exhilarating experience as you could hope for without breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect is here, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 8738 8199

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF 2000

PCZ #92 • 84%

NEW ENTRY Not that different from last year's groundbreaking title, but this 2000 edition has enough subtle tweaks to make it a worthy purchase if you loved that one. The best control system we've seen in what is definitely the best golf game available.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

NBA LIVE 2000

PCZ #85 • 82%

★ As slick as always, but what makes the 2K edition special is the inclusion of teams from the '50s onwards, comedy haircuts *et al*. Although not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, it's a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

OPEN TENNIS 2000

PCZ #92 • 81%

NEW ENTRY Not since *Super Tennis* on the SNES have we had so much fun hitting a ball back and forth over a net. After some initial reluctance the whole office stopped fragging and started lobbing. Incredibly playable and unsurpassed in multiplayer.

PUBLISHER Cryo • 0121 250 5070

NBA: INSIDE DRIVE

PCZ #82 • 81%

★ While not exactly the most popular sport in this country, *Inside Drive* manages to suck you in with its supreme playability. Its presentation is not quite up to EA standards (but then, what is?), but when the gameplay is this good, who cares?

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

VIRTUAL POOL 2

PCZ #58 • 80%

★ OK, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2

PCZ #68 • 79%

★ The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates, and when you're tired of the baize you can move round and have a go on the fully-featured darts board instead. Saves going down the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 020 7368 2255

ACTUA SOCCER 3

PCZ #72 • 78%

★ If you can't get on with *FIFA*, then *Actua* is the second port of call for footy fans. It plays a faster game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which helps to maintain its shelf life.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

BRIAN LARA CRICKET

PCZ #75 • 74%

★ Cricket isn't the easiest game to convert to the PC, but Codemasters has done quite a good job, despite the fact that *Brian Lara Cricket* has obviously been ported straight over from the PlayStation. For aspiring country-dwellers everywhere.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

SPACE COMBAT

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #82 • 89%

★ The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany, in which you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656

FREESPACE 2

PCZ #84 • 85%

★ Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4222

X-WING: ALLIANCE

PCZ #77 • 83%

★ At last! Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode of the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

STARLANCER

PCZ #91 • 81%

★ While *Starlancer* doesn't do anything startlingly new, it is a highly polished affair with compulsive gameplay and gorgeous visuals. A must for space sim fans.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

PRIVATEER 2

PCZ #44 • 80%

★ Not as open-ended as *Elite*, but far more rewarding as an overall experience. The graphics look great even today and, hey, it's on budget – so it's better value for money than ever.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MANAGEMENT

CM 99/2000

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #84 • 92%

★ More than a game... it's a way of life. So say fans of the best football management game in existence. If you dare to play it you can kiss your social life goodbye and expect to spend hours each and every day poring over unknown players in a bid to discover the next Ronaldo. The word 'benchmark' doesn't really describe how much better than the competition this game is.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

THE SIMS

PCZ #87 • 86%

★ This game offers a staggering amount of possibilities. Essentially, you create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life – it's the definitive docu-soap and makes for compelling gameplay.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

CAESAR III

PCZ #70 • 85%

★ Starting from scratch you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's utterly absorbing and probably the most addictive god sim in existence.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

SIMCITY 3000

PCZ #74 • 84%

★ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

PCZ #75 • 83%

★ Pack out your own theme park with the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden dippers, to *Nemesis*-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RT* is hugely addictive.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

ONLINE ONLY

EVERQUEST: THE RUINS OF KUNARK

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #92 • 90%

NEW ENTRY The combat-oriented online RPG of choice just got a whole lot better with this expansion pack. Chris Anderson has spent months casting spells with hundreds of other people and never stops talking about it, so there must be something special going on. *Ruins Of Kunark* doesn't really offer any radical changes, but in this case bigger really is better.

PUBLISHER Ultri Soft • 020 8944 9000



ALLEGIANCE

✱ The first true online only space combat sim, *Allegiance* is a complex yet rewarding beast. Now you can fly around with hundreds of others, co-ordinating strategies and establishing chains of command.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



ASHERON'S CALL

✱ The graphics and freedom to do almost anything make this title a commendable addition to the genre. However, it's a crying shame you can't kill other humans – most of the ones you meet deserve a good kicking.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



ULTIMA ONLINE: RENAISSANCE

NEW ENTRY It's been at the top for while, but now the sequel *UO2* is on the way the original looks dated. *Renaissance* isn't enough of an improvement for it to compete with *EverQuest* – online RPGs are moving on.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



ACES HIGH

NEW ENTRY More online airborne thrills with WWII planes. Aimed firmly at anoraky flight sim fanatics, you will find some of the most accurate flight and physics modelling of any game of its kind.

PUBLISHER HiTech Creations • www.hitechcreations.com

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #79 • 91%

✱ You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that's come closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. From the first mission it grabs you by the balls and doesn't let up until you're dead, with a bullet in the head. As a strategic shoot 'em up, games don't get any harder, or more compelling and atmospheric.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



SWAT 3

✱ Artificial Intelligence doesn't get any better than this. Add some spectacular graphics, an ingenious command interface and edge-of-your-seat gameplay, and you've got a top title.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



BATTLEZONE 2

✱ Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. The fight for world domination has never looked so good.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



ROGUE SPEAR

✱ We loved *Rainbow Six* and although this follow-up can't match *Hidden & Dangerous* for intensity, it's a superb romp through the world of terrorism. Pick your team, kit them out and plan your missions carefully.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



SPEC OPS 2

✱ Challenging *Hidden & Dangerous* for the top spot, *Spec Ops 2* puts you in charge of a four-man green beret squad intent on staying alive and shooting the enemy in the head. Incredibly realistic, with top-notch sound.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

Save **FFF's** phone 0800 092 0077

PCZONE ALL-TIME CLASSICS



DOOM

✱ This is the game that needs no introduction. Without *Doom* we wouldn't have had *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* or (gulp) *Half-Life*. Every time you play a first-person shooter you should take five minutes to pay homage to the game that changed the world as we know it. *Doom*, we thank you.



ULTIMA VII

✱ Still the best of all the *Ultima* games, and probably the finest RPG ever seen on a PC. The graphics might be old-hat, but the gameplay certainly isn't. *Ultima VII* blends exploration and character interaction, and it's the last title in the *Ultima* series to give complete party control.



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

✱ We reviewed this game back in the first issue of *PC ZONE*. It was a landmark RPG then and it's still a landmark RPG now, although the graphics obviously look a bit dated. Do we think it's the best RPG ever? Almost, but not quite. Cast your eyes up the mag a couple of inches for the answer to that question.



DUNE II

✱ If you know your strategy, you'll know that *Dune II* is the game that's done more than any of its rivals to define the genre as we know it today. The 2000 update was disappointing, but only because it didn't add anything new. The fact that it still plays better than many new titles is testament to its staying power.



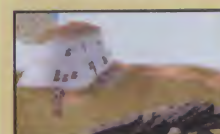
SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

✱ EA's *FIFA* series might look the part, but we're convinced that *Sensible Soccer* was and is the ultimate example of gameplay over presentation. With its famous top-down view, *Sensible* offers fast frantic action that does more to replicate the real-life game than any of its predecessors.



UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN

✱ This game came out of nowhere and took the world by storm. Compelling strategy, tense turn-based battles and a myriad of research options made this the most addictive game ever upon its arrival. Subsequent sequels were just as addictive, but this is the game that originally captured our hearts.



MAGIC CARPET

✱ Drawing gasps of amazement from everyone who saw it, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* was one of the most original and inventive games released in the early days of 3D. So original, in fact, that it never got the recognition it deserved. We still think the blend of action and strategy was spot-on.



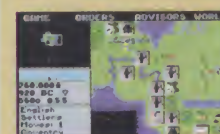
WING COMMANDER

✱ The original space combat game spawned the first big-budget PC series. In fact, the *Wing Commander* series was so hugely successful that they went and made a film. Inevitably, this was absolute rubbish and the public stayed away in their millions. Will these people ever learn?



TOMB RAIDER

✱ She might be getting a bit rusty round the gills, but when Lara first bounced onto the small screen we fell in love with her instantly. 3D action adventure games haven't been the same since and at the time nothing could touch it. Do you remember your first encounter with the T-Rex?



CIVILIZATION

✱ The original and some say the best turn-based strategy game. When *Civilization* first appeared, it was hailed correctly as the first game that changed and evolved depending on how you played it. Recent versions have presented more of the same, but in this case that is definitely no bad thing.

ON THE CD

Deus Ex is here, it's amazing and it's on this month's CD. So stop wasting time and go play it now. Are you still here?

★ **YOUR GUIDE** Martin Korda **DISK MASTER** Alan Stonebridge

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk. Please do NOT phone the PC ZONE office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

- ★ If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- ★ If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- ★ Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- ★ You need at least a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- ★ Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95/98 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 233 with 64Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- ★ Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are 3D accelerator only.



DEMOS + SHAREWARE

TERMINUS

Vicarious Visions

EXCLUSIVE




Yet another space shooter makes its way onto the PC. However, while most of the recent batch have revolved purely around combat, *Terminus* is more in the mould of *Elite*. Set in a constantly living universe, with its own evolving economy, you must earn your living as a star fighter. Along the way, you'll encounter many other characters with their own specific agendas, which will sometimes conflict with your own. In times like this, the only way out is to fight.

The demo comes with a tutorial that offers many helpful pointers and also provides you with a few humorous gems, such as stating that you can use your engines to propel your ship. Thanks for that, we never would have guessed otherwise. This aside, there's plenty to entertain yourself with here, including a Gauntlet mission, where you have to wipe out as many wings of enemy fighters as you can. Just a quick note for those of you with early I740 based or NVIDIA RIVA 128 cards. The former will cause the game to run poorly and the second is not supported by the demo. You have been warned.


Controls: Joystick and Keys

Behind all those lines is an enemy craft. Somewhere.

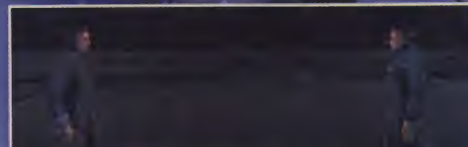




Auditions for *The Wrong Trousers 2*, went horribly wrong.



Right, how about you then? Have *you* got change for a fiver?



In *Deus Ex*, you get to hang with your bro.

EXCLUSIVE

DEUS EX

Eidos

There are already whispers round the office (OK, more like shouts of excitement) that *Deus Ex* will be the game of the year. Undoubtedly, we've seen nothing of such quality over the last six months. Now, exclusive to *PC ZONE* we're giving you the demo, so that you can experience this incredible game for yourselves.


All of you who've played *System Shock 2* will feel instantly at home with the interface. However, if you're new to the world of Warren Spector science fiction RPGs, you'll be pleased to know that there's a comprehensive tutorial included here, which

familiarises you with the controls. After you've navigated your way through it, it's time to savour the delights of the actual game. As a government operative, you must infiltrate a terrorist stronghold, but how you choose to do this will be up to you. If you fancy yourself as an '80s action hero, then tie a bandana round your head, grow some designer stubble and wade in, Arnie style. However, if stealth is more your thing, you can use the shadows for cover and sneak past your enemies. We think you'll agree that *Deus Ex* is a massively open-ended game, one that

allows each player to approach its challenges in the manner that best suits them.

If, after playing this demo, you need any more convincing that *Deus Ex* is one of the best games of all time, turn to page 54 and read our review. Oh yeah, one more thing. Apparently, this demo doesn't work on German PCs, so if you've got one, we're afraid you're just going to have to do without.

Controls: Mouse and Keyboard



I know this really good dentist you could go and see.

THE REALM

Codemasters

The Realm is an ever evolving online RPG, and on this month's disk you'll find both the game files and the link to the website which will enable you to get your initial free, 30 day registration. *The Realm* is a world full of mystical beasts and necromancy, populated by a massive community of thousands of real-life players. You'll be able to join guilds, create fellowships and set out on daring quests as you seek companionship, intrigue, adventure and excitement. If you're into online RPGs, it's well worth checking out. After all, it is free.



You can even get married in the game.

OPEN TENNIS 2000

Cryo

After last month's review, in which we admitted to being totally hooked on *OT2000*, we thought we'd give you a chance to experience the action for yourselves. We've even managed to get you an exclusive court, racquet and player, you lucky people. Select your game length, and one of three difficulty levels before heading off to the English Open (Wimbledon, basically) for a match.

Although the controls are initially confusing, perseverance will reveal that they are one of the game's strongest features. Instead of concentrating on getting to the ball, you're given far more scope to execute your next shot, which makes for some intense rallies. However, to fully experience the enjoyment of *OT2000* you'll need to play with a friend, or even with someone you don't like very much if you haven't got any. Basically, it's all the fun of real-life tennis, without the annoyance of tennis elbow.

Controls: Keyboard or Game Pad



Open Tennis 2000, easily the best PC tennis game ever.

After three hours of play, and no points scored, the players decided to go home.



You get to kill loads of green goo shooting allens.



Kurt decided to pay his girlfriend a surprise visit.

MDK2

Interplay

So many people have spent so much time trying to work out what *MDK* stands for. Who cares? Anyhow, in *MDK 2* it stands for Max, Doc and Kurt, so none of you need to spend sleepless nights contemplating the meaning of those three little letters.

In this demo you get to play as Kurt. After familiarising yourself with the controls and learning how to use your ribbon chute and sniper scope, it's time to shoot some allens. With fantastic graphics, intense action and a variety of green goo shooting allens to kill, you should get a fair idea as to whether the full game is for you or not.

Controls: Keys or Game Pad

ON THE CD ONLINE

With these helpful programs, using the Internet will be a whole lot simpler

Gamespy 3D v2.19

Fire it up and it'll find the fastest servers playing all your favourite games.

Neotrace 2.12a

Neotrace is a high-speed graphical traceroute with integrated whois and ping.

PingTool 2.6a

PingTool helps you find the best online game servers on the Internet.

Winsock 2

Users of early versions of Win95 may require this to run PingTool.

DUN Manager 2.0d

Simplify and enhance Dial-Up Networking and Remote Access Services.

FTP Explorer 1.0010

Explorer-style FTP service.

GetRight 4.2b (New version)

Salvage broken downloads and more.

MIRC 5.71 (New version)

Latest version of the Internet Relate Chat software.

Mplayer

Excellent, free online gaming software.

Kali 2.0

Useful client software for playing games over the Internet.

ICQ2000a build 3140

World's best Internet and online chat package.

Roger Wilco Mk1.1a

A virtual walkie-talkie app that runs alongside your favourite multiplayer games.

Datum Online

Find your next job online with Datum Online.

Go!Zilla Free 3.5

Recover from download errors and resume failed downloads.

FreeUK

Sign up files for this fantastic ISP.

ON THE CD UTILITIES

To make your hard disk more user friendly, all you have to do is install this little lot

WinZip 8.0

Windows 95 and NT version of WinZip.

EzDesk 1.8

Saves the position of your desktop shortcuts and folders.

Power Toys

Some very useful add-ons for your desktop.

TreeSize Professional v2.31

A powerful and flexible hard disk space manager.

Adobe acrobat Reader 4.05

Readers for documents distributed in Adobe format.

HyperSnap-DX Pro 3.61 (New version)

Screen-capture even in DirectX/Direct3D or 3dfx Glide modes.

SciTech Display Doctor v6.53

The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

Windows Media Player

Play the Web's coolest audio and video with Windows Media Player.

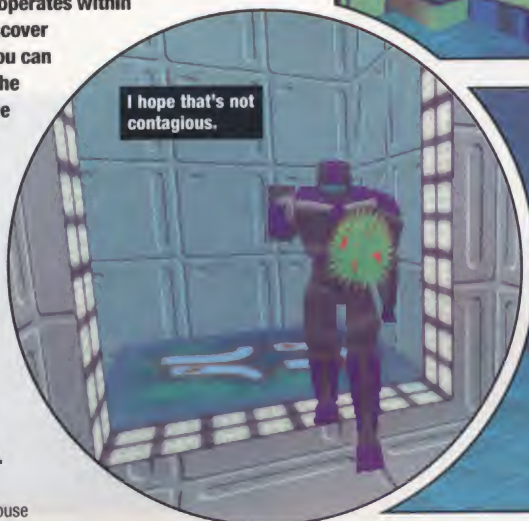
AI WARS

Nexus Information Systems

A *System Shock*/Matrix hybrid, *AI Wars* puts you in charge of an Internet agent, who *literally* operates within the Net. It is your mission to discover classified information, which you can then sell on the black market. The money you gain from this can be used to increase the power of your computer.

In this open-ended demo, you'll find that there is often more than one way in which you can solve puzzles or complete missions. There's a tutorial to get you started, after which you can try your virtual hand at a single-player game, or if you prefer playing with other humans, there's an over-the-Net multiplayer mode.

Controls: Keyboard and Mouse



PATCHES

Install these, and your fave games will work a whole lot better

Carnivores 2v1.1

Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun v2.03

Descent 3 v1.40

Diablo v1.08

Diablo II v1.01 **

Grand Prix Legends v1.2.0.1

Ground Control v1008

Half Life v1.1.0.1

Half Life: Opposing Force v1.1.0.0

High Heat Baseball 2001 v1.2

Imperium Gallactica 2 v1.05 Beta

Lemmings Revolution

Messiah v0.2

Settlers III v1.60

Shogun: Total War

Sim Theme Park v2.0

Soldier of Fortune v1.05

South Park Rally

Terminus v1.1 to 1.3

Terminus v1.2 to 1.3

**** Install this patch before playing the game. If installed later, there is a risk that it will wipe your saved games.**



EDITORIAL

If you're stuck on a game, you may well find the answer right here. Also, some more *Champ Manager* updates for your personal enjoyment

Tips and Solutions

Handy hints and top tips on all your fave games. Well, most of them.

Championship Manager 99/00 Update

Latest transfers, updates and the rest.

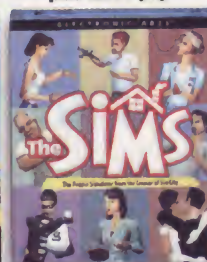


EXTENDED PLAY

Mods, mods and more mods. Turn to page 154 where we tell you all about *Strike Force*, *Counter-Strike 6.6 Beta*, *JailBreak Beta 2* and *JB2 Stage 2*. They're a bit good, don't you know?

ALL 3 FOR UNDER A TENNER

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when you join the best...

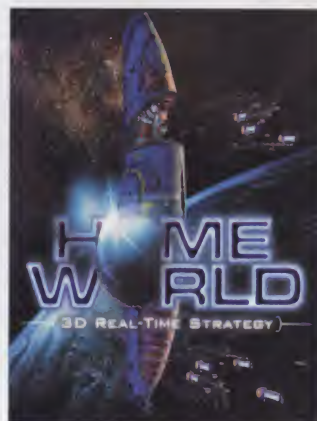
www.show.homesoftwareworld.co.uk

Full terms and conditions can be found on the website.

2 pc games for £30*



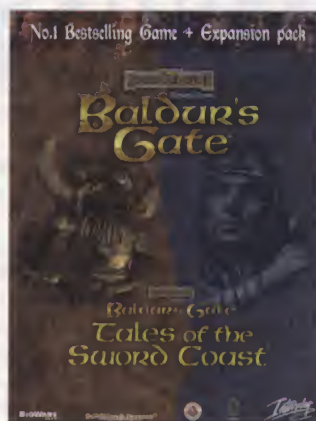
Driver



Home World



Freespace 2



Baldur's Gate Double Pack



mind blowing savings



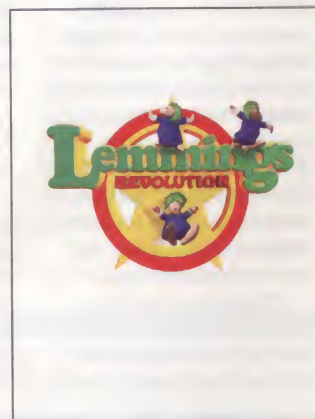
Pharoah



Roller Coaster Tycoon



Half-Life Opposing Force



Lemmings Revolution

many more titles available in store

**DANGEROUSLY
ENTERTAINING**

Virgin

megastores

*Stickered items only. While stocks last. Prices may vary in Republic of Ireland.

EXTENDED PLAY

Don't buy new games, change the ones you already own.

Like *Homeworld* and *Unreal Tournament*

★ WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF



On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page ??????????.

So then. What's a mod? A mod is short for modification. It's a collection of files that, well, modify the way an existing game plays. Popular mods include *Counter-Strike*, a team oriented game of terrorists versus counter-terrorists, which plugs directly into your existing copy of *Half-Life*. Often they're created by hobbyists and game fans and are free (in fact, we don't know of any mod with a price tag). There are countless mods available for countless different games in every genre; *Homeworld* has the ability to accept them and we feature the best of them here.

HOMEWORLD MODS

★ BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Filename: BSGv01a.zip

Homepage: www.geocities.com/daveraa

Size: 1.6Mb

Rating: ★★★★★

In a nutshell: Colonials do battle with stonehearted robot bastards from outer space. Ideally suited to the *Homeworld* environment.

Battlestar Galactica is a dreadful film. Especially when watched alongside the likes of *Star Wars*, released a whole year earlier, it features poor costumes, weak special effects, and is badly acted. It has little to recommend it bar the sinister electronic baritone of the Cylon warriors, which kids imitate even today by gulping down air and belching "By your command" (try it, it works). The film was directed by Donald P. Bellisario, who has since been behind TV masterpieces such as *Airwolf* and *Quantum Leap*. They're crap too, and just like *Battlestar* you simply aren't able to drag yourself away from the early evening reruns. Weird.

Although only in the Alpha stage of development, the *BG* mod for *Homeworld* includes a number of key elements from the

film, including, of course, the Colonial Viper and Cylon Raider. There are even the big, lumbering Battlestars, big and blocky and seemingly not quite to the right scale, giving the whole game a rich '70s sci-fi feel.

The development team of four hobbyists are a keen bunch, and their passion for the film is obvious. They're on the lookout for anyone who can help add to the *BG* mod, from Web designers to ship designers, so if you feel you're able to lend a hand, visit the *BG* Web page and get in touch.

★ STAR TREK Vs STAR WARS

Filename: fedbetav011.zip

Homepage: www.strategyplanet.com/homeworld/stvsw

Size: 570Kb

Rating: ★★★★★

In a nutshell: Sit in the pilot's seat of all the best ships from the two best flicks. Imperial, Federation, Rebel Alliance, Klingon, Romulan, they're all here.

The glorious imaginary worlds of *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* have more fans, followers and copyright violations than any other films in history. People go to fancy dress parties as Romulans, go to conventions as Commander Riker (complete



A Klingon warbird thing takes a pounding from the USS Defiant.

NET ADDRESSES

BOOKMARKS

Homeworld Home Page www.sierrastudios.com/games/homeworld

Homeworld X www.strategyplanet.com/homeworld

Unreal Tournament Home Page www.unrealtournament.com

Planet Unreal www.planetunreal.com

with belittling scowl and stick-on mini half-beard), and bark at their kids in glottal Klingon. They talk of Vulcan mind probes and of Mos Eisley as though they'd actually been there. Now these same folks can immerse themselves even deeper with the supreme *Homeworld* engine powering their fantasy.

The people behind the *Star Trek Vs Star Wars* mod were keen to create a game variation that, put simply, allowed them to fly all the coolest ships. These include everything from small Federation fighters, shuttlecraft, X-Wings and A-Wings to Calamari Cruisers, Imperial and Victory Class Star Destroyers and D'Deridex (an imposing Romulan Battleship the size of a small planet). Even the mighty Executor Class Star Destroyer, better known as the Super Star Destroyer, makes a welcome appearance.

The mod is extremely popular and undergoes regular changes. They're even planning to add in Dominion craft to spice things up a bit, and there can't be a single *Star Trek* fan on the planet who hasn't wanted to drive one of those Jem'Hadar Battle Cruiser things. Look, even we're getting excited now.

★ FLEET ACTION

Filename: FA_MOD_

5_29_0005.zip

Homepage: www.geocities.com/voidsurfer_2000

Size: 821Kb

Rating: ★★★★★

In a nutshell: Subtitled as a tribute to *Wing Commander*, *Fleet Action* includes all the top ships from the top selling game, including Carriers, Thunderbolts and the Perry Naval Base.



Wing Commander fans will go damp at the thought of playing their fave game within *Homeworld*.

Both *Wing Commander: Prophecy* and *Wing Commander IV: The Price of Freedom* were stunning games in their time, and it only seems fitting that the slicker *Homeworld* engine should give craft from the *WC* series a new lease of life.

Although not exactly a carbon copy of the Electronic Arts original, this mod should keep space combat fans happy with their hands clamped firmly



Despite being one of the most crummy space flicks ever, *Battlestar Galactica* has a large and loyal following.

around their joysticks: many of the evocative ship names from the original title are included, together with the rather large and imposing Perry Naval Base. Our only reservation is that many *Homeworld* owners will already have either *Wing Commander* or *Privateer* on their shelves, and are thus unlikely to be that aroused by the thought of mutating their *Homeworld* game for something they've already played.

★ **BABYLON 5**

Filename: B5ModV2.2.exe
Homepage: mods.firststones.com/homeworld
Size: 5.3Mb
Rating: ★★★★★

In a nutshell: A total conversion that aims to change every existing element of *Homeworld* into one from *Babylon 5*. Looks good so far.

Like most mods, *Babylon 5* has been written by a team of enthusiasts and has grown with suggestions and gentle nudging from the people who download and play it. If this sounds a bit Mickey Mouse, it's this very approach that has shaped hits like *Counter-Strike* into world beaters and is being used more often by developers in the know. It also highlights the pigheaded stupidity of larger developers such as Valve, who has recently ravaged its best-seller, *Half-Life*, by releasing a patch that "enhances" the core gameplay in ways that no existing player asked for or wanted.

The only complaint we have about *Babylon 5* actually relates to every *Homeworld* mod we've downloaded, namely that the websites stink. There's hardly any information about what the mods are and what they do; mostly you're bombarded with the developers whacking off at their own work.

NEW UNITS

★ **STAR TREK SHUTTLE**

Filename: omega.zip
Homepage: mods.firststones.com/homeworld

Size: 133Kb
Rating: ★★★★★
In a nutshell: Type 11 Shuttle from *Star Trek*.

★ **BABYLON 5 OMEGA**

Filename: omega.zip
Homepage: mods.firststones.com/homeworld
Size: 772Kb
Rating: ★★★★★
In a nutshell: Fine looking ship from the world of *Babylon 5*. Also see the *B5* mod (above).

★ **BABYLON 5 STARFURY**

Filename: omega.zip
Homepage: mods.firststones.com/homeworld
Size: 3.9Mb
Rating: ★★★★★
In a nutshell: Omega and Starfury ships from *Babylon 5*. Also see the *B5* mod (above).

UNREAL TOURNAMENT MODS

★ **SWAT**

Filename: SWAT_Beta1.zip
Homepage: www.planetunreal.com/swat
Size: 38.4 Mb
Rating: ★★★★★
In a nutshell: Effectively *Counter-Strike* for the *Unreal Tournament* engine, *Special Weapons And Tactics* puts a team of police officers against a team of terrorists.

Given the runaway success of *Counter-Strike* for *Half-Life*, it seems silly not to replicate the game arena within other titles – in this case, *Unreal Tournament*. *SWAT* involves a team of highly trained police officers fighting terrorists from around the globe, in various locations and with unique variations. The developers are keen to stress the importance of the underlying code as it enables a whole raft of non-player characters to populate large levels and give the whole place that 'lived in' feel. Real-life players will be able to sneak around arresting people; terrorists will be able to blend in to the background.



It doesn't get messier than this.

Guns are varied and, although not quite up to the amazing detail of those seen in *Counter-Strike*, are effective and make the right noises. Existing *Counter-Strike* players will be able to step right in with a gun rack offering the M4 Carbine, AK47 and Ingram MAC10 among others.

As yet, the maps are a bit thin on the ground and nowhere near as beautifully crafted as those for *CS*, however, the possibilities with the *Unreal Tournament* graphical engine are endless. We should have it on our disc next month.

★ **AGENTX**

Filename: ax101beta4b.zip
Homepage: www.planetunreal.com/agentx
Size: 2.5Mb

Rating:

★★★★★

In a nutshell:

Simple but pleasing mod that recreates the Nintendo N64 classic *GoldenEye* within the *Unreal Tournament* environment.

Originally the work of a lone hobbyist, *AgentX* is one of those freebies you pick up and find yourself playing continually, usually one-on-one with a friend over a small network at 3am. Now that the development team has plumped in size, the mod may begin to flourish.

In beta release at the moment, it's really just a change of



Hut hut hut! SWAT team members stalk around one of the early beta maps.

weapons and maps to put N64 owners into all too familiar surroundings. New toys include an Assault Rifle, Grenade Launcher, Machine Gun, Silenced PPK, Mine Launcher, and, of course, the Golden Gun. [E]

NEW LAYOUT

As you may have noticed, we've tweaked the layout of Extended Play very slightly. From this point on, we'll be including the names and sizes of every file we list, meaning if we're unable to include them on the disc you can go and find them yourself online.

Places to search for games, game patches and all related files include:

www.fileplanet.com

Used by countless gaming sites across the globe, FilePlanet is a wonderful way to get software. Not only does it pigeon-hole every file into Yahoo-like categories, it keeps track of major FTP mirrors and other file repositories where you can get copies of the file, should the main download area fail.

www.fileleech.com

Similar in both function and appearance to FilePlanet, FileLeech is another huge archive aimed solely at gamers. The only real downside is the fact that it's all white text on dark backgrounds, making it hard on the eyes when it's late and your eyes are stinging and you want to go to bed.

www.gamespyder.com

The Yahoo! for gamers, GameSpyder provides a very strict and useful categorised approach to gaming. Every genre and sub-genre is catered for, as are some of the lesser known games and utilities. Growing every day and definitely worth a bookmark.

ftpsearch.lycos.com

Once you know the name of the file you are after, Lycos' FTP Search is invaluable. It keeps records on most of the world's most popular FTP archives and mirrors, and lists every file on their hard drives. This means it's very easy to get straight to the toys you want – and in the fastest locations, too.

We will rate everything to give you a good idea of what's hot (and what's not), and we'll also give two descriptions – a short one for the attention deficit disorder sufferers among you, and another giving a much more detailed and in-depth view.



Er, shit.

grandprix 3



the most eagerly awaited
formula one racing simulation!



excessive choice of games

Virgin

megastores

DANGEROUSLY ENTERTAINING

THE LIONHEAD DIARIES



This month **Steve Jackson** tells some tales of life in the **Black & White** village

★ WORDS Steve Jackson



Some early designs for villagers. Fancy having your face on one?

GOD AND OTHER WONDERS

Those of you who've followed the development of *Black & White* in this column will already be familiar with the plot. Within the game the player assumes the role of a god, with potentially awesome powers. This power comes from belief, the more devotees you have who worship you, the greater your godly powers. However, whether you choose to be a benevolent or malevolent god is up to you. You can earn loyalty by servicing the villagers' every need, or you can terrorise them mercilessly until the miserable wretches worship you through fear of punishment.

Thus the villages and the villagers themselves are vital ingredients to the game. With so much emphasis on the 'little people' (as they are known at Lionhead), it's essential that village life within Eden is as authentic as possible.

Programming the lives of the villagers is a task Peter [Molyneux] chose to take on himself. For the last couple of years, he has toiled, head down, grappling with the problems of the *Black & White* villages. He was determined to take AI to new heights. If you play a god, you need people worthy of lording over. Though everyone was happy that the game visuals were hugely impressive, the whole thing could easily be let down by the seemingly mindless and repetitive movements of the hundreds of villagers in the game. The cleverer the little people, the more rewarding it will be for the player to rule over them.

Peter's plan was to give each villager a personality made up of dozens of wants and desires. These then play off against each other in that villager's own 'mind'. For example, every villager needs food. He also has a desire to collect wood, to play, to relax, to be protected, to improve his town, to be lazy, to get married, to have children and to offer gifts to his god. Villagers even have a desire for good weather and for rain when the crops need it.

Peter explains the idea: "Although most people have broadly similar desires, everyone is an individual, and I wanted the characters in the game to reflect this. Not only does each person have a vast database of changing wants and needs, but when they have children, a percentage of this carries on to the next generation. So over time you'll see family traits, such as laziness or physical strength, or even a genealogical bias for jobs, such as a family who has always worked as farmers through the generations.

"There's a huge benefit in having the social structure of the game work like this. However, although it's a fascinating microcosm of life, it doesn't take into account good and evil. And this is vital for the world of *Black & White*. People are governed by desires rather than morals. Happiness is derived not from goodness, but from a lack of desires. In other words, when the character has everything it needs, it is happy. The more desires a villager has, the more unhappy he or she is.



We guess one of her desires is for a nose job. Any nose.

"Conversely, the unhappier a villager is, the greater the likelihood he will lose faith in his god. Their reasoning is that if you're not providing for them, you can't be much of a god. Again, this has nothing to do with whether you're good or evil, only whether the villagers are being looked after on a basic level.

"So, what do you do? You satisfy their desires. If they're hungry you dump a pile of food in front of them. Now they're happier. And they're grateful to you. But if you ply them with food, why not cut down trees for them? Or clear paths, or kill wild animals for them? Would you use all your power just to keep your people happy? Being too good to them can have its own pitfalls. You might find that your subjects become lazy. They forget how to carry out work for themselves – because you're doing it all.


"When I thought about this, I came to the conclusion that if you provide everything for your people, they'll soon lose their religion anyway.

Basically, if miracles happen all the time, they aren't miracles at all.

"You could argue that people's belief in a religion, any religion, is based on need. If we were perfectly happy, would we need gods? This, as you can tell, gets pretty deep, but as far as *Black & White* is concerned, I was delighted with the way we gave everyone a personality and a changing system of belief, without having to hard-wire good and evil into the game."

In addition to Peter's AI, each character in Eden has a name and a face. They have jobs, belong to tribes and their traits change over time. And everyone will react differently to an experience or incident. These are not mindless minions!

As there are so many villagers to be created for the game, we allowed ourselves a little self-indulgence. Everyone at Lionhead has become a villager, with their face digitised and allocated to an individual. We've even included all the game-testers who've helped during *B&W*'s development.

This prompted Jamie Durrant, Lionhead's webmeister to suggest we offer a few villagers to the public with an online auction. He contacted the auction site QXL, and it was agreed all proceeds would go directly to the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Four villagers' faces were auctioned. We expected they might go for around £10-£50, but were amazed when the first one sold for around £450! One of the others went for a similar price. But the fourth sale broke the record when someone bid more than £1,000 to be the face of an Egyptian village leader. Even Peter was flabbergasted. "I guess..." he said, "It's as good a way as any of achieving some sort of immortality." 

★ As well as being a director of developer Lionhead, Steve Jackson is co-founder of Games Workshop, author of *Fighting Fantasy* Gamebooks, and a columnist for *The Daily Telegraph*.

★ The next instalment follows in our October issue, on sale Thursday 24 August



You better hope this chap believes in you.



Over £1,000! At least it goes to charity.



An existentialist walk in the park. Does God exist?

END ZONE THE WORLD ACCORDING TO... THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

BARKING DOG STUDIOS

Real-time strategy has always been a popular genre on the PC and Barking Dog Studios has its hands on one of the better examples out there. *James Lyon* asks them just what exactly they're on about

We were rather impressed with *Homeworld* when it first came out. Just when the RTS genre looked like becoming as exciting as a Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen theme night, Relic blew the dust off with its *Battlestar Galactica* influenced

3D space 'em up. We could look upon it with fresh eyes and proclaim that it was good. The praise was high, so how could Relic possibly say no to an expansion disk? Just like this: "No." It has other games to work on. But rather than using the profits from *Homeworld* to build a set of iron gates to keep out the angry fans, instead it passed the work on to Barking Dog Studios, a Canadian company made up of employees from rival companies. In the past their programmers have worked on such games as *Half-Life* (astounding), *Independence Day* (woeful), and *Power Pigs Of The Dark Age* (what?), but we won't hold any of that against them.

As a team, while not producing anything of their own yet, they have had a hand in the highly praised *Half-Life* mod, *Counter-Strike*, which is currently hiking up rather a lot of phone bills. But this team remains separate from the *Homeworld: Cataclysm* team, and Chris Stewart, one of the designers, talks to us about his views on the project and the bigger picture.

Do you think you can live up to the praise that *Homeworld* received?

We hope so. We've worked very hard to expand on the gameplay and storyline from *Homeworld*, to make a game that both old fans and new fans to the *Homeworld* universe will respond to and enjoy. If you imagine Relic as being the first to plant its flag

in a new genre with the release of *Homeworld*, then we like to think we're going to be the second group to plant a flag, for both companies, by trying some new things, experimenting a bit. We're happy with the results of our experimenting and *Homeworld* fans seem excited, and so we're excited about it too.

How do you react to the possibility of *Homeworld: Cataclysm* being seen as a cynical cash-in?

Well, we'll have to wait to see if anybody believes that first. The *Cataclysm* team members were some of the first fans of *Homeworld* and so there was no cynicism involved when we all signed on to expand on the *Homeworld* saga. We've strived to make sure that *Cataclysm* has a lot to offer fans of *Homeworld* and RTS games.

It's commendable that this is being released as a standalone product, but do you think data/add-on disks in general are a worthy purchase or are developers just living off other people's successes? The founders of Barking Dog did some early work on *Homeworld*, just as the company was forming. Later Relic and Sierra invited Barking Dog to participate in the success of *Homeworld*. An opportunity like this is a chance to prove that a relatively unknown team is capable of creating a great game. So as a company we had a chance to help *Homeworld* and Relic achieve its vision and now we've been given the chance to expand on it.

So, is *Cataclysm* being seen as a way to make a name for yourselves before going on to something of your own design?

Sure. We have a very talented group of people here

and that counts for a lot. Publishers want to know whether a group can operate as a team, if they can actually deliver what they promise, so a project like this is a good chance to walk the walk.

As a developer, how would you feel if a game you've been working on was critically derided? Sad.

How much attention do you pay to reviews?

We pay attention to reviews. People's impressions of a game can be very informative. They can tell a development team what people thought they got right, what they thought they got wrong, what they were expecting to be different (for better or worse). A smart development team will always listen to what people have to say.

There's been an issue recently where adverts for *Daikatana* have used misleading quotes – described as "absolutely brilliant" by PCZ when we gave it 53 per cent. Are mediocre games relying too much on PR to sell themselves? You'd be hard pressed to find a product, any product, not just video games, that isn't pumped up in advertising. That's the whole point of advertising. At the same time, everybody knows that if you don't measure up, the hype will come back to haunt you.

What is going to be coming out of Barking Dog's camp next, then?

Currently we're just heads down, eyes forward on finishing *Cataclysm*. We're a great RTS team coming off a great game, so whatever we do next will be

“An opportunity like this is a chance to prove that a relatively unknown team is capable of creating a great game”

CHRIS STEWART, DESIGNER FOR BARKING DOG STUDIOS

Chris Stewart answers the big questions.

about making another challenging title for gamers. Some of us have discussed maybe working on world peace instead, but our playtesting sessions with the Pop Dog team suggest that world peace isn't our strong suit.

Are there any ideas for *Homeworld* that you had to ditch because they just wouldn't work?

The Siege Cannon originally fired Chihuahuas, but it just didn't feel right for the game. Yes, in all seriousness, development teams always have stuff that gets set aside. We had a lot of ideas that we put aside because one of our goals for *Cataclysm* was that it should remain familiar to *Homeworld* fans, and some of our ideas, as cool as they were, turned the game into something else entirely. But you always keep your ideas nearby. They often come in handy on another project.

What do you think the future has to offer RTS games? Is there a lot more to be accomplished or are we just repeating ourselves?

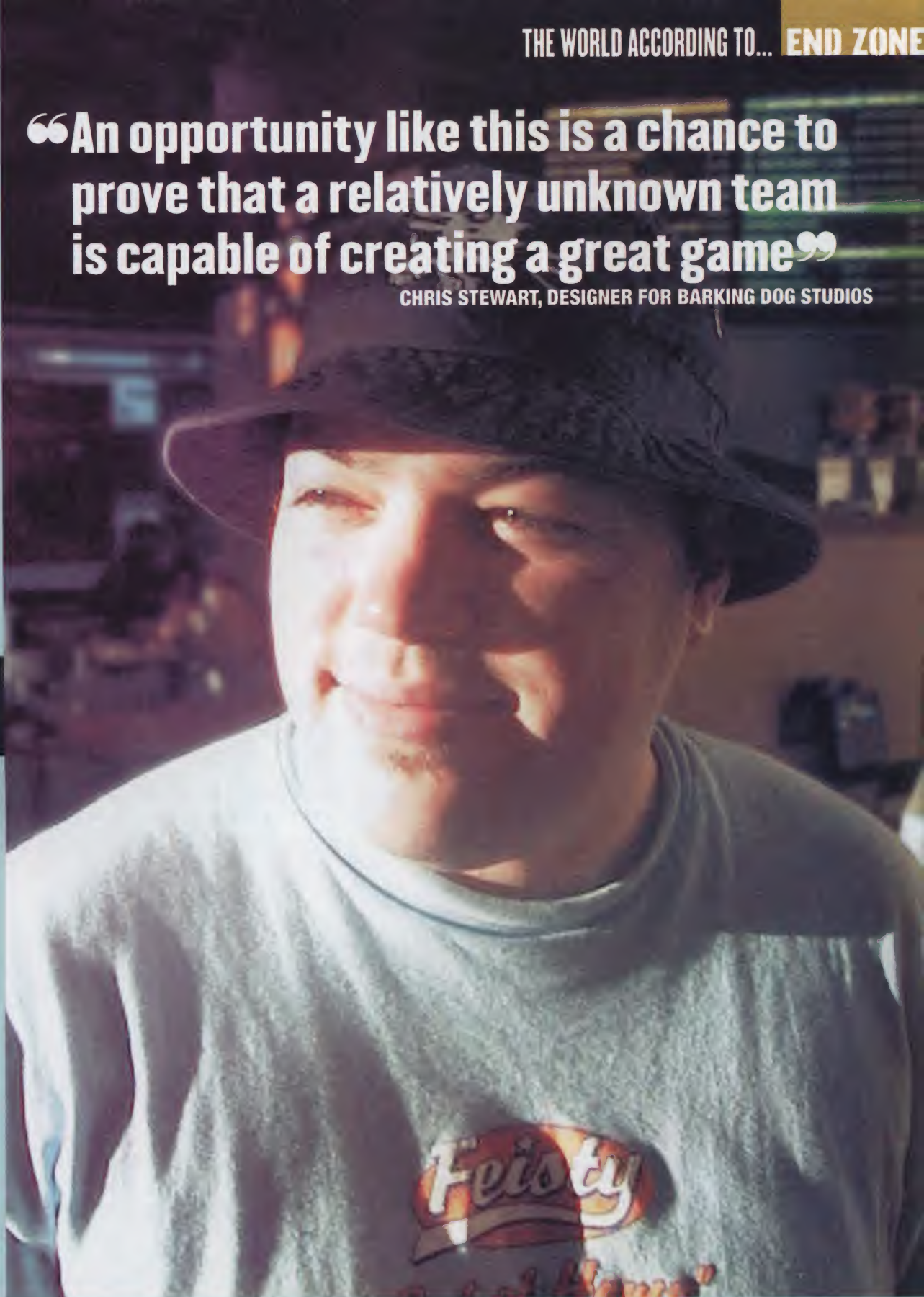
There is always more to be accomplished and there

will always be new things to try. Relic's goal was to make an RTS game that operated in full 3D. With *Cataclysm* we've taken the same concept and tried things differently, created new gameplay options for players. And there's a good chance somebody will go "Hey, that's cool. But what about something like this?" So long as developers keep trying to give players new challenges, it's a step forward.

Is 3D a step in the right direction or just a novelty?
It's a step forward. A fully 3D RTS has provided new

challenges for Relic and Barking Dog. Relic took one approach and provided gamers with new challenges. We've added new elements (like a new resource and slip gates that allow players to move ships across space without cost), stuff we think will provide fans with new gameplay challenges.

How important are graphics and sound in the RTS genre, ie are they just a pleasant distraction or can they enhance the gameplay in any way?
They definitely play an important role in RTS. ➔





As you can see, it still has spaceships in it.



There are plenty of improvements in *Cataclysm*.



The graphics have been given a noticeable polish.



Will this make it into the add-on pack Hall of Fame?



Shame there are no Chihuahuas.



Does anyone play it at this zoom level?



Now that 3D RTS has really taken off, the world is ready.



Part of the Barking Dog team worked on *Counter-Strike Beta 5*.



The rest of them helped to playtest it and iron out some problems.

← Partly it's deepening the game universe, enhancing the story, giving more of an environment for players to immerse themselves in, but mostly it opens up new gameplay options. The fully 3D engine of *Homeworld* married to a fog of war, as in *Cataclysm*, added a whole new element to movement in the game. In addition to trying to flank around opponents, you can 'flank' over or under them in *Cataclysm* and without them ever seeing you, something that isn't possible in a 2D strategy game. Sound makes the weapons amazing, but our sound programmer, Terry, worked very hard to add separate ship voices into *Cataclysm*, which means that, just by the sound of the voice, a player knows exactly what ship has hollered that they're under attack, or that they've spotted the enemy, and that means the player already has a lot of information to base tactical decisions on before they even start looking into the situation. Graphics and sound do add a certain amount of icing to a game but, used correctly, they can also add to the strategy.

With demands for better AI, is it getting more difficult to program convincing representations?
I'm not an AI programmer, so I'm not sure how much I can answer that. I know there are programming challenges right now (I can tell by watching the programmers on the team frowning at their machines) and there will continue to be challenges programming AI in the future as developers ask their games to control more and more complex concepts. From a designer's standpoint though, a lot of difficulties can be offset by the involvement of the player in the game. I remember growing up playing video games, and we were convinced that our Atari systems were purposefully pulling tricks on us, stunts that were never programmed into the game. People will always read between the lines of code, to humanise the AI, because we prefer to think we're fighting against an opponent, not just a machine.

Why do so many of these games still insist on nearly the exact same model of resource gathering/building?

Because it's a good, good part of a strategy breakfast. Using the tried and true harvesting model is a good starting point for creating strategy in a game. From there, a development team can work to expand on that strategy. Other RTS games have different strategy goals that require a different model and that's cool too. The future will have more harvest and build games as well as games with a new spin on the RTS genre and improvements for the genre will result from the two cross-pollinating.

What present and future RTS games from other developers do you think are bringing the genre forward?

I reckon *Homeworld* made a good step forward and *Ground Control* took a good step in another interesting direction. I think everybody is watching *Black and White* intently, for obvious reasons. There are a lot of very strange and exciting things happening with that game. There are a lot of interesting games coming out. We here at the Dog would like to see RTS move towards TAG, becoming a Tactics and Action Game, allowing strategy games to move onto a gaming console where they can reach a wider audience.



Some bastard makes Barking Dog stand out in the cold just so we can get a photo.

Regarding games such as Microsoft's *Allegiance*, do you think that this is the way forward – with the RTS commander playing only a small, albeit essential part, in the whole game?

There isn't really a single way forward – one right way. Things work best if different approaches are tried. Some things will work, some won't, some will inspire others to try something else.

Cataclysm's, adds depth to the game for the players. A rich storyline can help to bring a fictional universe, like the *Homeworld* universe, to life for gamers.

What chance do you think the X-Box has against the PlayStation 2 etc?

The Magic Eight-ball says: "Ask again later".

“We have a talented group of people. Publishers want to know if a group can deliver what they promise. A project like this is a chance to walk the walk”

CHRIS STEWART

With regards to that, do you think the multiplayer warfare will soon see a mix between both the RTS and FPS genres?

Who knows for sure? We predict that whatever comes next will involve guns.

Tell us about your involvement in the *Counter-Strike* mod...

Mostly the Cat Dog team (that's the *Cataclysm* team) helped the Pop Dog team (the team that worked on *Counter-Strike* Beta 5) by playtesting for them. Massive firefights, lots of yelling and lots and lots of fun.

With mods like this being made, do you think we are seeing a return to the 'bedroom developers' of the 8-bit days?

There will always be hard-working modders. Really, it's hard to say if they ever went away.

Do you think the online shooters such as *QIII/UT* are too faceless? Does a higher level of interactivity akin to *CS* or *TFC* makes them more appealing?

They're four different games with four different gameplay goals. Each of them is trying something different in the FPS genre and each does that something very well.

What about the single-player games, then?

Some games don't need to have a single-player component to be a massive hit (Gooseman [main coder of *CS*] and the Pop Dog team proved that with Beta 5). Other games do need a single-player component. A good single-player story, like *Homeworld's* or

What are your thoughts on the future of the PC as a games platform?

The Magic Eight-ball says: "Definitely". PC gaming isn't going away anytime soon.

Is PC gaming/gaming in general getting better or worse as we move on?

Ever since the days of game floppies in plastic bags, there have been highs and lows for PC gaming, but, overall, it's been a steady progression forward. New machines and new technologies just create new opportunities for developers to try new things. There's no reason that PC gaming shouldn't continue to surprise gamers.

Tell us where you plan to be as a developer in one year's time.

We plan to be deeply involved in another game, dreaming up some amazing things for gamers to play with.

Fair enough. *Homeworld: Cataclysm* looks like being as good a way to get them noticed as any. But are they talking out of their arses, or is the game going to enter the halls of semi-add-on disk fame alongside the likes of *Opposing Force* and *Ultima VII: Serpent Isle*? It looks pretty promising so far, but I guess that we'll just have to wait for the review to find out.

As to Barking Dog's future, they don't want to give too much away, but at least they've got a good head-start. Whether they're going to stay in the RTS genre is anybody's guess. As long as they try something new and innovative, I'll be as moderately happy as any games journalist can be. ☺

TEAM TALK



Disco dancing in the ZONE office? It surely can't be true. England's Sunday league performance in Euro 2000 must have affected us more than we thought

★ **STANDING STILL** Chris Anderson

The sight of Dave 'Travolta' Woods dancing gaily on a colourful mat in the office with a worrying degree of enthusiasm proved to be cause for great concern this month (see the review of said colourful object in Gadgets on page 114). Let's Dance,

by and getting a glimpse of the action. Dave, Martin and Mark seemed the most anxious to ensure the dancing mat received a 'thorough' review, although Helen and Ruth took a brief stint on the dance floor to show them how it's done, bringing some much needed talent and elegance to the

discovered that Richie's bride-to-be refused to let him put a Dreamcast or DVD player on the wedding list, forcing him to opt instead for an outdoor vacuum cleaner so he can clean the leaves up in the back garden. The PC ZONE team, aghast at the injustice of it all, promptly jumped to his rescue and chipped in to buy him a top-of-the-range DVD player (well, at least that's what the bloke on the corner said when we bought it from him for a tenner). Thus ensuring he would have something exciting to open up on his wedding day to go with all the toasters and tea-sets from well-meaning aunts and uncles.

This month also saw the return of Clan UK to the big smoke to take on ZONE at Counter-Strike. Having roundly thrashed us at Unreal Tournament during a previous visit, Dave,

Mark, Richie, Martin and Tony marched down to The Playing Fields to put the situation right with a blistering performance that cut the Clan down to size. The Zoners won two of the three heats, although it has to be said that the first heat (15-14) and the third (6-5) were closely fought battles. While I'm on the subject, we've had a lot of UK clans writing to us asking if we would take part in a challenge match. You'll be pleased to know we will soon be taking challenges once a month on the PC ZONE server (point your

browsers to <http://193.133.49.229>). Look out for more details in next month's PC ZONE online section.

Finally, it is with great regret we announce that Tim McDonald (freelance designer) won the Euro 2000 auction we had in the office. We all bid for the teams we wanted (yours truly shelled out £35 for England only to watch them play like chimps, the tits) but Tim was the one who put his money and Euro hopes on France. He received close to £200 when Les Onions beat Italy in the final, which is deeply regrettable because he is a) an Arsenal fan and b) sitting in the office with an unbearably smug grin on his face. We congratulate him and sincerely hope he does not meet with any freak accidents on the way home from work involving a difference of opinion between himself and a fast-moving car. ☹

“What started as a light-hearted laughathon rapidly descended into a serious battle to ‘outdance’ each other”

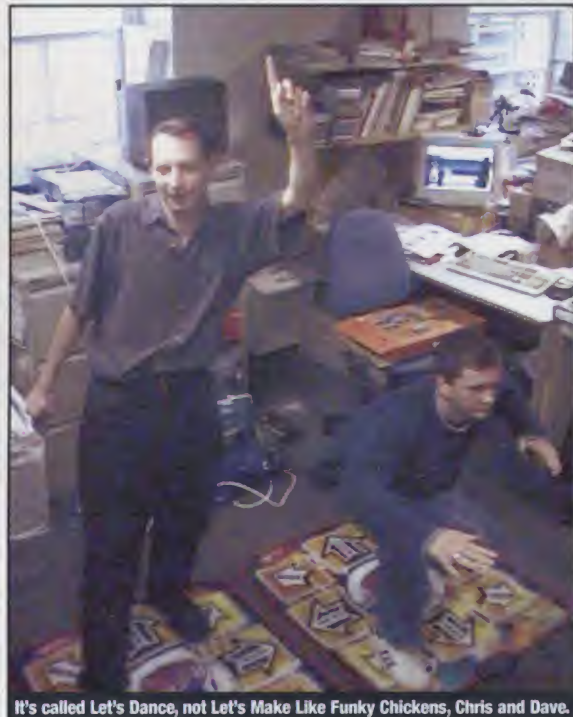
proclaims the packaging of our comedy entry into the Gadget section, and Dave took the big colourful box up on its offer and proceeded to do exactly that. Laugh? Er, no we didn't actually, we all joined in. What started as a light-hearted laughathon rapidly descended into a serious battle as the ZONE team redoubled their efforts to 'outdance' each other, with nary a care for any 'normal' types who might be passing

proceedings (I'll take it my cheque is in the post, girls).

All this nonsense went right over Richie's head. He was too busy worrying about his pending marriage to the lovely Shona to take part in our ill-fated '70s dance revival. Limousine hire, missing relatives, catering arrangements and wedding lists were all vying for pride of place at the top of Richie's think-tree. Speaking of lists, it was with great alarm we



Mr Smug himself, Tim 'Euro 2000' McDonald.



It's called Let's Dance, not Let's Make Like Funky Chickens, Chris and Dave.



Let the battle commence... Clan UK and the ZONE team during their hard-fought Counter-Strike session - we won.

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